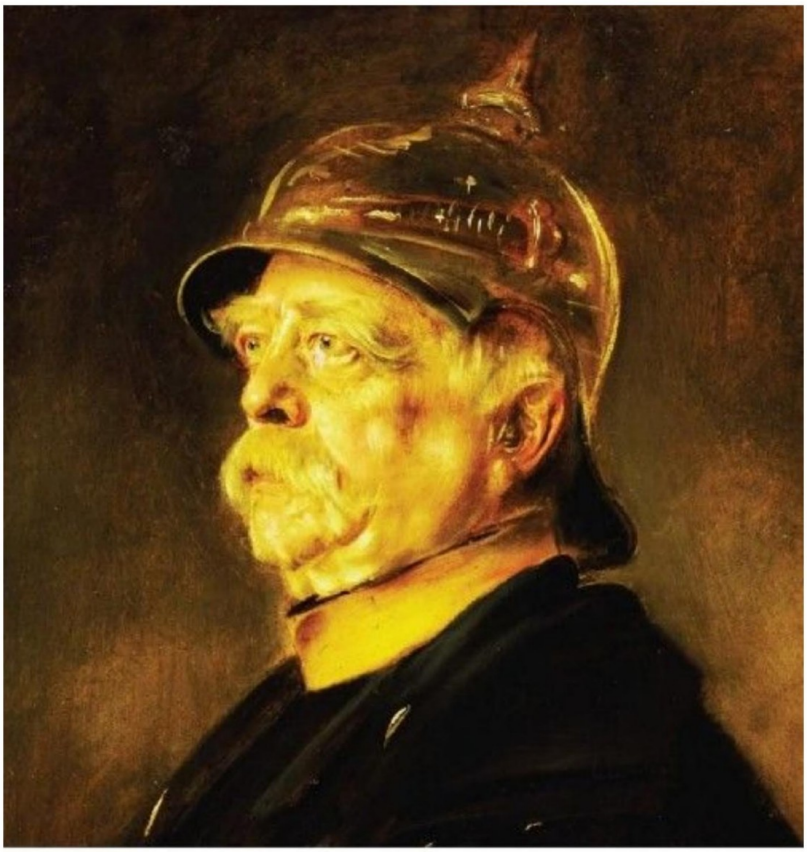

William Dawson

History of the German Empire

OZYMANDIAS PRESS

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HISTORY OF THE GERMAN EMPIRE

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THE GERMANIC FEDERATION, 1806-1848

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AT THE OPENING OF the nineteenth century the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation still existed, after a thousand years of chequered life. Long decadent, it was now moribund, however, and perpetuated only in name an august sovereignty which at one time extended over a large part of the European Continent. Diverse in race, language, religion, and political forms, having no common bond in administration, law, justice, or military organization, the many parts of the imperial dominion were kept together in firm union only so long as they were subject to a strong rule, and when once the centre of authority had become weakened, decline and disintegration ran their certain course.

The first powerful impetus to this process was given by the Peace of Westphalia, which secured to the German Princes a large degree of territorial sovereignty. Now for a century and a half these Sovereigns had steadily encroached upon the imperial jurisdiction and disputed its claims, local autonomy had spread and strengthened, until the might and majesty of Charlemagne's and Barbarossa's sway had come at last to be represented by a loose and incoherent political system, composed of States which had little in common save a desire to magnify themselves at the expense of the Emperor and of each other. Of these States there were three hundred, for the most part petty and as political organizations contemptible, each with its Court and Government, army and bureaucracy, customs and taxes, coinage, weights, and measures. Giants amongst pigmies, Austria and Prussia overshadowed all the rest.

For over five hundred years the Austrian reigning house had borne the imperial title, yet for a long time it had been Prussia and not Austria which had been gaining in power at home and repute abroad. As a member of the old Empire, Prussia had long gone her own way; never had the Emperors succeeded in asserting an effectual authority over her masterful rulers. More and more the northern kingdom had disputed the superiority claimed, in virtue of a sovereignty that had become little more than titular, by its older but less vigorous rival on the Danube. From the time when Frederick the Great established the Prussian military State, whose foundations had been laid by his father, and challenged the power of the house of Habsburg in its citadel by the rape of Silesia, an act of aggression which he had to defend by seven years of continuous warfare, the precedence of Austria in the

Empire had been definitely threatened.

Frederick the Great had almost doubled his territory; he had increased the population under his sway from two and a half to six millions and his army from 82,000 to 200,000. As his master-thought in life had been conquest, so his supreme concern at the last – he died in 1786 – was that the gains which he had won, some by fair, others by unfair means, should be consolidated and preserved. “My last wishes when my breath expires,” he wrote in his will, “will be for the happiness of my country. May it ever be ruled with justice, wisdom, and decision; may it be the happiest of States because of the clemency of its laws, the best managed financially, and the most bravely defended, because of the honourable and worthy fame of its army.”

The immediate successors of the greatest of the Hohenzollerns failed to live up to his reputation, or to improve or even rightly value the inheritance which he had committed to their keeping. Frederick William II, known as William the Fat, was, with all his amiability, a man of small intelligence and weak character. He neither ruled well himself nor had he the wit to choose men able to do his work well for him, and he became the creature of scheming flatterers. A frank libidinist, his notorious amours were only made more vulgar by the bouts of religious extravagance which alternated with them. More than once be made a feeble show of challenging Austria’s reviving pretensions, but when it came to supporting words by acts, his courage failed him. The administration of his country, energetic and efficient at his accession, he left weak and corrupt: the army had diminished in numbers and in spirit; debt had accumulated though taxation had increased: in civil life, public spirit and private virtue had decayed. It was due to this King even more than to his successor, Frederick William III, a weakling likewise, though free from his coarseness and private vices, that twelve years after the death of Frederick the Great the fame of that ruler’s martial triumphs had been sacrificed and Prussia’s prestige in Europe for a time suffered eclipse. Even in Germany the once powerful northern kingdom had ceased to be either feared or respected. The Alliance of Princes (*Fürstenbund*) which Frederick had concluded, with himself as its centre, had been dissolved, and States which, like Saxony, had been accustomed to look to Prussia for support had gravitated instead to Austria.

The German household, divided against itself, its chief members

indifferent custodians of the common interest of security, was unable to stand the shock of Napoleon's onslaught. After Austria, already vanquished in Italy, had been compelled to conclude on behalf of the Empire the Peace of Lunéville in 1801, the subjugation of all Germany followed swiftly. Meanwhile, Bavaria, Würtemberg, and Baden had sought safety by joining the enemy of the larger fatherland. State after State fell beneath the hammer-blows of the mighty Thor, and soon from the Rhine to the Elbe ancient sovereignties lay in ruins, heap on heap. The climax came in 1806, when at the battle of Jena (October 14th) the kingdom of Prussia, which Frederick had raised to such a dizzy height of power, was shattered and overthrown; while by the succeeding Peace of Tilsit (July 7, 1807) its area was reduced to the four eastern provinces of Brandenburg, Silesia, West Prussia, and East Prussia, and its population from ten to five millions. Two months before Jena, Napoleon had declared the Holy Roman Empire dissolved, in order that he might himself claim succession to Charlemagne, and on August 6th, at his bidding, Francis II not unwillingly laid down the imperial office. So it was that a dominion which had been created by warlike emprise, and many acts of masterly if cunning statecraft, succumbed in helpless impotence, unhonoured and unregretted.

If Napoleon found delight in putting down the mighty from their seats, he was no less fond of exalting the humble and meek. As far as was consistent with his political designs, he lightened the sorrows of many of his German victims, for in his rare deeds of magnanimity, as well as in those of heartless cruelty, there was always a deep, calculated purpose. To some he gave new territories for those taken away, to others he gave titles; to two reigning houses he deigned to give his relatives in marriage. There was a systematic readjustment of princely rank amongst the rulers who passed into his service or under his protection. The duke, for reward or consolation, was made a grand duke, the grand duke an elector, the elector a king. Three of the four kingdoms comprised within the present German Empire, Bavaria, Würtemberg, and Saxony, owed their higher status to the favour of Napoleon.

The fall of the Empire and the consequent re-arrangement of the map of Germany seemed to mark the occultation of the German national idea. Even in its moribund condition, the Empire had to the

last, in some sort, symbolized the substantial unity of the German peoples. Now not only the substance but almost the shadow of unity appeared to have passed away.

In place of the dissolved Empire Napoleon created (July 17, 1806), the Confederation of the Rhine, composed at first of sixteen of the southern and western States, which he had allowed to retain their independence, and which acknowledged him as protector and overlord. The most important of these vassal States were Bavaria, Würtemberg, Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt, and Nassau. To the original members of the union others were added after the battle of Jena, and chiefly Saxony, the Mecklenburgs, Anhalt, and Oldenburg. The Confederation was to have had a representative assembly, meeting at Frankfort, but this was never convened. At that time, therefore, old Germany consisted in the main of Austria, Prussia, and the Rhenish Confederation; of the petty octavo and duodecimo States, some had been absorbed by France, others thrown together with larger ones, and others again merged in a brand-new kingdom of Westphalia, formed for the purpose of supplying Napoleon's brother Jerome with a crown.

The fate which Germany suffered at Napoleon's hands was a bitter one, but it was hardly worse than she deserved. Had the States at the outset coalesced loyally and met the invader with united and unselfish will, disaster might conceivably have been averted; and even had military defeat still befallen them, honour would have been saved though all else had been lost. So disunited was Germany, however, that Napoleon was able to deal with the States one by one and apportion to each its fate in turn. Thus Prussia, instead of going to Austria's assistance betimes, dallied and prevaricated until it was too late either to help Austria or to save herself. So little conscious was her King of the duty of the German States to one another, that he concluded a bargain with the usurper by which he received Hanover in return for Prussian territory (December 15, 1805). Frederick William III hated the idea of war, and clung to the hope of staving it off by concessions and capitulations, only to find too late that the more he surrendered the greater were Napoleon's demands. By 1806 Prussia had fallen to such a depth of impotence that further decline seemed impossible.

It had been the chief boast of Prussia's later rulers that theirs was a

military State, yet in the hour of need the army itself proved incapable. It was not the standing army organized by Frederick the Great but a militia, a voluntary *levée en masse* of the people, that later saved both State and Crown. The aristocracy, as a class, failed no less ignominiously to rise to its responsibilities. There were many brilliant exceptions, but on the whole the crisis found most of the men who had claimed to be the natural leaders of the nation lacking in public spirit, and content to accept with weak resignation whatever fate might have in store for their country. It is a significant fact that of the six most eminent soldiers and statesmen who at the beginning of last century devoted themselves to Prussia's renewal, Blücher, Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Stein, Hardenberg, and Wilhelm von Humboldt, only the last was a Prussian. Of the spiritual harbingers of Germany's rebirth, Prussia could claim Arndt, Schenkendorf, and Schleiermacher, but most of them – Fichte, Körner, Niebuhr, the younger Eichhorn, and the rest – were likewise sons of another soil.

The officials of the higher bureaucracy had long been taught to regard themselves as the King's meek creatures, and as such they had been treated; hence in that time of appeal to manly virtue it was inevitable that there could be no response where every trace of manliness had been extinguished. "Like the soulless machine it was," writes a German historian, "the administration quietly went on its way, caring little under which Sovereign it lived, whether Frederick William or Napoleon; and, accustomed to look above for remedies, the high officials even repressed the aspirations of the healthy, energetic spirit which still lived on in the so-called common people." A district governor in Silesia pressed upon Napoleon's troops supplies which they neither sought nor wanted, and introduced the Emperor's decrees with "We Napoleon by the grace of God," until Napoleon himself rebuked his foolery. In Berlin a general refused to obey the King's orders to convey to the fortresses the ammunition then lying in the city. When Napoleon arrived in that capital, seven Ministers of the Crown and a crowd of officials promptly took the oath of allegiance to him. Writing of the demoralization prevalent in Prussia at the time, the same German historian says: "Not only did the Junkers, who had hitherto boasted that they were the chief pillars of the State, break like dried reeds in the wind; the other 'pillars' – the bureaucracy, the learned classes, and the higher society down to the burgher class,

covered themselves with shame in those days." In every rank of society faithlessness and cowardice were shown in their unloveliest forms. Jews sold themselves into Napoleon's pay, and in servile newspapers proclaimed his fame and denounced everything Prussian, yet when the usurper had been overthrown the same men arrogantly claimed that they had saved the country. One Hebrew writer asserted that at Waterloo fifty-five officers of his race had fallen, though the number of officers lost in the entire Prussian army was only twenty-four.

But Prussia had no monopoly of sycophancy and treachery in those days. The rulers of Bavaria, Saxony, Würtemberg, and Baden all danced attendance upon the conqueror, enrolled themselves in his retinue, and seemed happy in their new service. What was right in the ruler was more than pardonable in the ruled. The professors of Leipzig effusively greeted Napoleon as the hero of his age. Even Goethe, the honoured leader of the nation's intellectual life, could watch from his Weimar home the fall and rise of Germany at that time without emotion; he philosophised and wondered, but was unperturbed. His admirers excused this apparent apathy by his age, yet when Napoleon partitioned a large part of Germany amongst his favourites the author of *Faust* was only fifty-six. Nowhere was the old rule thrown off more lightly and the new rule accepted more readily than in the Rhineland, whose populations had already changed sovereignty and form of government so often. It is difficult for men to be patriotic who are not certain to what country they belong to-day or to what country they will belong to-morrow, and though the Rhenish peoples have been reproached for the facility with which they changed their allegiance, their indifference may be excused, at least in part, by the tragedy of their position. No greater shame ever fell upon countries or nations than that which the German Princes brought upon their own lands and peoples over a hundred years ago.

The facts thus briefly stated will help the reader to visualize the German question as it presented itself at the beginning of the nineteenth century. There remained no longer a Germany, but only the disjointed members of a Germany that had been. To bring these members together, to kindle a new national consciousness, to weld the many races into a political unity, was a task to be achieved by efforts long continued and means the most diverse – by statecraft and

diplomacy, by parliaments, universities, and schools, by commerce and railways, by customs unions and military conventions, by revolution and war, above all by a stern political discipline which should subordinate the individual State and citizen to the needs and interests of a larger commonwealth and a new nation. Hardly might it have seemed possible that a German Empire could be recreated out of elements so unpromising, yet it was in that time of national abasement and humiliation that the spirit of unity originated. Periods of progress were to alternate with periods of stagnation, periods of buoyant confidence with those of depression and disillusionment, before the ideal, passing through all the gradations of doubt, hope, and probability, could reach the firm ground of certitude; yet if the way was to be long, so much surer was the goal.

In 1813-14 a supreme effort was made, under Prussia's leadership, to throw off the French yoke, and it succeeded. Yet in the campaign which sealed Napoleon's fate the King of Saxony fought in the Corsican's army and King Frederick of Würtemberg wrote to wish him "a happy return" to Germany. All Europe, Princes and people alike, breathed again freely after 1814, and most relieved of all were those German Sovereigns who had bartered themselves into Napoleon's service, had taken their orders from him, marched under his banners, fought his battles against their own countrymen, and had been proud to receive their crowns at his hand. Now began the work of internal reconstruction. The old States were restored, but not in every case the old frontiers. On November 1, 1814, the Congress of Vienna assembled in order to decide on the future constitution of Germany. Prince Metternich, the Austrian Chancellor, who was destined to exert a baneful influence on the development of German political life for over a generation, was the President and almost the dictator of the assembly. The Princes marked their patriotism by indulging in a greedy scramble for territory, bartering souls like chattels, and rectifying boundaries like the fences of their forests and parks. Every German State strong enough to press its claims wished to be enlarged at the expense of its weaker neighbours. Prussia wanted the whole of Saxony, while Austria, England, and France, supported by Bavaria and other States of the dissolved Rhenish Federation, opposed the demand. Nevertheless, Prussia did well for herself, for she obtained a large slice of the Saxon kingdom – the present province of that name – most of

Westphalia, some territory on the left bank of the Rhine, and Swedish Pomerania, while the territory of which Napoleon had robbed her was restored. Bavaria received Ansbach and Bayreuth, and Hanover received East Friesland.

Though the Confederation of the Rhine and the kingdom of Westphalia had disappeared, they left behind them traces and traditions important for the future development of German political life. Westphalia had been given a constitutional system of government, and in the States united in the Rhenish Confederation the principles of the French Revolution, in their good as in their less attractive aspects, had been applied, though in most of them the earlier constitutional arrangements, such as they were, were for the time suspended. Hence, during the time that the seal of France rested upon it, Western Germany received political impressions which were never wholly removed; a break with the Empire was made in political thought and life; and when the detached territories went back to the old allegiance their populations retained much French influence, and Paris for a time interested them more than Berlin or capitals nearer home. Above all, they gained a fixed bias towards Liberalism and all appreciation of free institutions which have never ceased to single them out from the rest of the country; without being denationalised, they had become singularly open to progressive influences from the outside.

"When a man like Napoleon falls he falls altogether," wrote the Russian diplomat Count Nesselrode, after the battle of Leipzig (October 18, 1813). So good an apothegm deserved to be true, but for a time it miscarried. At that great "battle of the peoples" the conqueror's dream of world dominion was, indeed, shattered, yet though Napoleon was sent a captive to Elba six months later, the end was not yet. Before the Congress of Vienna had completed its work, the dethroned Emperor returned to France (March 1, 1815), and the war was resumed. It is characteristic of the selfish particularism which ruled even in that time of danger that the Prussian general Gneisenau, than whom no soldier was more a politician or fonder of committing his immature political ideas to paper, drew up a memorial proposing that unless the Allies granted Prussia's territorial demands beforehand she should withdraw and enter into an alliance with Napoleon. Gneisenau gave this document to the Chancellor Hardenberg, and asked that it might be offered for the King's consideration. The

discreet Minister, however, returned it to its author with the comment that what it proposed was a “moral enormity” which could not be even whispered in the royal ear.

After Waterloo had been fought (June 18, 1815), and the disturber of Europe had been sent to his “sullen isle,” St. Helena, there to gaze upon the sea which he had vainly hoped to conquer, the Congress of Vienna faced the larger problem of the future of Germany. Here opinions were hopelessly divided. Baron von Stein, believing that the surest pledge of national unity and of the continuity of the German name lay in the intimate association of the small with the two major States, was ready to welcome the revival of the Empire, still under the house of Habsburg, as the best means of securing this end. Hanover favoured this course, and in so doing almost stood alone. The King of Prussia, usually slow to make up his mind upon political questions, was quick to recognize the danger and fatuity of Stein’s view, and in rejecting it he was supported by Hardenberg and Humboldt, the former opposing the idea of restoration from Prussia’s standpoint and the latter holding it to be contrary to the interests of Germany as a whole. Public opinion in the monarchy was urgent upon one point, viz. that the undisputed primacy in Germany which Austria had held in the past should no longer be conceded.

Nor were the rest of the States, even the small ones, more willing than Prussia to resume the old position of subordination in the Empire, for at its dissolution they had gained complete sovereignty, and this sovereignty neither Princes nor peoples were now willing to renounce. Of the secondary States, none was more jealous of its new independence and higher political status than Bavaria, whose unfortunate position it was to be too small to rank with Austria and Prussia as a Great Power, but too large in area, population, and still more in self-esteem, to be willing to associate with the petty principalities on equal terms.

Yet the prospect of the Empire’s revival was never a hopeful one, for Austria herself was opposed to any such futile attempt to call back the past. Remembering how she had for so long a time shone as the one star of the first magnitude in the German constellation, she was determined that, whatever form German union might take, the leadership should fall to her in the future as in the past. Nevertheless, the Emperor Francis had no desire to hold again the imperial office.

Not only was he doubtful whether the German Princes would be willing in general to return to the imperial fold, but he was conscious that the office had lost in dignity and would no longer carry authority. In this prudent attitude he was unreservedly supported by his Chancellor, Prince Metternich. It was from Prussia that the solution of the problem of Germany's future organization came in the proposal of a loose union of States. It was a solution defective and inadequate, a makeshift in every sense of the word, yet in the circumstances the only one that seemed practicable. As early as November, 1813, there had been conferences at Frankfort at which the Princes agreed to surrender so much of their independence as might be necessary to the creation of a constitution for all Germany, but no details were arranged. The choice was between a federal State (*Bundesstaat*) and a federation of States (*Staatenbund*), and it was soon seen that the latter represented the utmost concession to national unity that was to be hoped for. In order to bring matters to a practical issue, Hardenberg in the following year laid before Metternich a draft constitution, under which all the States were to be united *in œternum* in an association to be called the *Deutscher Bund*, or Germanic Federation, whose purpose was to be the maintenance of Germany's security within and without and of the independence and inviolability of the federated States. There was to be a directory of Sovereigns at the head, with an upper and a lower house, the former composed of delegates of the Princes and the latter of delegates of the Princes and estates jointly. For Austria the scheme went too far, and at Metternich's suggestion it was modified, and thereafter was discussed by the Governments of the six kingdoms preparatory to its submission to the whole of the States.

Accepted as a basis of negotiation, and subjected to repeated revision, the outcome of this scheme was the *Federal Act of the Congress*, dated June 8, 1815. By this Act or treaty the sovereign Princes and Free Cities of Germany united in a permanent federation of States, which came into existence in November of the following year, Austria and Prussia joining for all their territories which belonged to the dissolved Empire, the King of Denmark for the duchies of Holstein and Lauenburg, the King of the Netherlands for the grand duchy of Luxemburg and for Limburg, and the King of England for Hanover. The dissolved Holy Roman Empire had contained more than three hundred separate sovereignties, but, to the

benefit of Germany, the great majority of these had disappeared. The original number of States now federated was forty-one, though the number fell eventually to thirty-three, owing to the extinction or absorption of certain of the smaller principalities. Austria was given the presidency in virtue of her headship of the old Empire. Within the union the States retained independent sovereignty. Such powers as they devolved to the Bund were vested in and exercised by the Federal Diet or Assembly, a standing council composed of plenipotentiaries of the Sovereigns and Free Cities, whose meeting-place was the old imperial city of Frankfort. The jurisdiction of the Diet was very limited. Strictly speaking, the Diet was an executive council. It made no binding laws; it could vote ordinances, but they were only valid when adopted by each State independently; and it had no power to conclude treaties, for the Governments reserved this right to themselves. In contrast to the narrowness and jealousy of the faint-hearted rulers of those days, fearful lest one whit of their sovereignty should be threatened by concessions to liberal ideas, a statesmanlike utterance of the Hanoverian plenipotentiary at the Congress of Vienna (October 21, 1814) stands out, conspicuous for its sobriety and sanity. "As for all this clinging to the word 'sovereignty,'" he said, "the King of Great Britain is just as indisputably a Sovereign as any other Prince in Europe, and yet his throne is not undermined but rather strengthened by the liberty of his people." Such a sentiment was hopelessly untimely, even if it was understood.

The Diet transacted most of its business as a council of seventeen, the eleven larger States having one vote each and the other States being grouped in six *curiæ*, each with one vote. Before any resolution could be voted on, each member had to take the instructions of his Government, and in the case of the curial votes the States concerned had first to agree amongst themselves. For the determination of certain fundamental or organic questions, such as the modification of the basis and organization of the Federation, the admission of new members, the amendment of the constitution, or the cession of federal territory, except to federals, the Diet sat as a plenary body (*im Plenum*), i.e. the States had individual though unequal representation. In this event the six kingdoms, Austria, Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony, Würtemberg, and Hanover, had four votes each, Baden, Electoral Hesse, Hesse-Darmstadt, Holstein, and Luxemburg three each,

Brunswick, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and Nassau two each, and the rest of the States one vote each, giving a total of seventy.

In the inner council most questions were decided by absolute majority of votes, but in the plenary body a two-thirds majority was needed in the case of questions relating to peace and war, and for the rest no resolution was valid unless adopted unanimously. In practice, therefore, the principle of *liberum veto* applied in the Plenum, so that the smallest State or Free City in the Federation was able, theoretically, to obstruct the will of all the rest. Apart from this right of veto, the small States had it in their power at all times, by acting together, to determine the policy of the Federation altogether according to their will, and the only effective restraint was the danger of arousing the resentment of their powerful allies.

In one respect the power of the Diet was far-reaching and even ominous. As the main concern of the Federation was peace and tranquillity at home, it was given the right to interfere in constitutional disputes occurring in the federal States. Disputes between members of the Federation might also be referred for settlement to the Diet, which was able to enforce its decisions, like its resolutions generally, by means of a federal execution. This consisted of the military occupation of the contumelious State by troops of one or more of the Governments commissioned to execute the Diet's will.

For the treaty contained provision for a federal army, to which each State was to be required to contribute a "contingent" or quota proportionate to its population. With a short-sightedness which half a century later was to bring about a severe retribution, Austria, concerned far more to exercise imperial power than to recognize imperial responsibilities, opposed Prussia's proposal to place the federal army on a strong and efficient foundation. Had Prussia had her way, the army would have been equal to 1 per cent. of the population, a ratio which would have given a force of 300,000 men, and the obligation of the federal States in relation thereto would have been real instead of nominal. Austria, however, was lukewarm in the matter, and the other States, particularly those of the South, were suspicious of an arrangement which, if faithfully carried out, would have placed at the disposal of the two major Powers so preponderant an armed force. The contingents were never forthcoming in the allotted numbers, with the consequence that the duty of providing for

Germany's safety was left primarily to Prussia.

Such as it was, however, the federal army proved a singularly heterogeneous formation, devised on no common plan, clad in uniforms of as many colours as Joseph's coat – an army without uniformity of system, training, equipment, or administration, or even a commander-in-chief, for this officer, who should have been the symbol of unity and efficiency, was only to be chosen in the event of war, and then by the Diet and subject to the orders of the Committee on Military Affairs. Five towns were created federal fortresses – Luxemburg, Mayence, Landau, Ulm, and Rastatt. Equally impotent was the Diet in the matter of taxation: the power to levy taxes was denied to it, and its necessary expenditure was met by "matricular contributions," or levies upon the States proportionately to population, a principle of assessment taken over from the old Empire.

With the constitution as thus devised the rulers were on the whole well pleased, for it left Germany as divided as before, but the peoples at large received it with disappointment and disgust. While the Congress of Vienna was sitting, writes Friedrich von Gentz, its secretary, "deputies from every part of Germany "were in the Austrian capital, "agitating day and night for a federal constitution." For the nation had hoped to see its liberation confirmed and assured by political unity. In the proclamation of Kalisch, dated March 25, 1813, following the treaty of alliance concluded there between the King of Prussia and the Czar on February 28th, the German nation had been called to the struggle on behalf of a reconstituted Empire, in which its "ancient and native spirit" was to be revived, an Empire in which Germany should be rejuvenated, vigorous, and free. So in the darkest hours of humiliation it had been cheered, and its heaviest sacrifices had been lightened, by the thought that it was fighting not only to free Germany from foreign oppression, but to win for itself unity, by the creation of ties stronger and more intimate than those which held the old Empire together. It had been cherishing an illusion. Germany was not yet ready to become either an Empire or a federal State, and even if it had been ready the Sovereigns were not willing to forgo any substantial part of their independence. Austria, above all, was bent on maintaining the old divisions under new sanctions, as the surest guarantee of her continued domination.

"Poor, faithful German nation," wrote the patriot-poet Ernst Moritz

Arndt in bitterness of soul, “thou art to have no Emperor! Thy Princes wish themselves to play the Emperor. Instead of one lord, thou art to have two dozen [in point of fact, there were over three dozen] who will never be able to agree upon German questions.” But what else could have been expected? The Congress of Vienna was exclusively an affair of the Princes and Governments. They alone decreed, appointed, and composed it, and only their interests and wishes had voice or hearing in its deliberations. It was a typical creation and expression of the old diplomacy. In this august areopagus, in which the elect of the diplomatic world of Europe was assembled – Blücher, fresh from the battlefield, where niceties of language are disregarded, called it a “council of thrice-accursed constables and lazy-bones” – the German nation had no part or lot whatever, though its political destinies were being determined for an indefinite period; it had no share in its deliberations; its opinion was not once given, because it was never sought; nowhere was the nation as such mentioned in the Act under which the new union was constituted.

The Germanic Federation began its career handicapped by distrust and odium, and it lived up to its first reputation. For practical purposes it proved a replica of the Holy Alliance which was created in 1815 under the influence of Czar Alexander I, and its purpose was to do for Germany what the Alliance was intended to do for the Continent – to counteract all democratic movements and to preserve the existing political order unchanged, if need be, by forcible measures. For just fifty years it maintained an undistinguished existence, its Diet chiefly useful as a coward’s castle from which the liberties of the people could be safely assailed, and as affording an arena in which Austria and Prussia were able to contend for the hegemony of Germany.

From the standpoint of national unity in particular it was a cruel mockery. Designed to renew the earlier union of the States, in effect it emphasized only their dissensions and discords. The Empire, at the time of its extinction, had indeed become the pale reflection of a reality majestic and imposing in the days of its full vigour and vitality; yet almost to the last, even when fallen into impotence and decay, it was impressive, and conveyed, to the imagination at least, ideas at once grandiose and inspiring. For the Bund no such distinction could be claimed. The creation of artifice, compromise, and expediency, it

never possessed inherent strength or outward dignity; to the smaller Princes it afforded a city of refuge, in which they were immune against arbitrary treatment by their powerful neighbours, since the security of each was the concern of all; but because it was unable to commend itself to the German peoples by public utility or any recognition of common national interests, it failed entirely to win either their enthusiasm or their attachment. If the Empire had represented a condition of disorganized union, the new Bund represented one of organized disunion.

The leading European Governments accredited ambassadors to the pompous Frankfort Diet, but the compliment was not returned; only seldom did the Diet appoint envoys for special purposes. On the other hand, the federal States themselves had their own envoys at foreign Courts, and exercised their power to conclude treaties and alliances, so long as these were not directed against the Federation. As the Diet inevitably served as a cockpit in which the two rival Powers disputed for position and influence, the secondary and petty States constantly ranged themselves on one side or the other. If Austria and Prussia were in agreement its proceedings went smoothly; if not, bickering, discord, and intrigue ran riot.

It was not the Bund and the Princes but the nation which kept alive the desire and the hope for a more real unity during the succeeding half century. Throughout this period the political life of Germany was dominated by two great parallel movements. One had as its object national unity, the other aimed at constitutional liberty. It is impossible to separate the history of these movements, so closely were they related; though not identical, they proceeded from the same source, and derived their strength from the same spiritual impulses.

Article 13 of the Federal Act of June 8, 1815, declared that each federal State should receive an assembly or representation of the estates (*landständische Verfassung*). It was a pious affirmation, intended to mean much or little or nothing at all, according to the will of the Sovereigns concerned. There was no suggestion of parliaments or legislatures as understood in constitutional countries. Interpreted literally, the most shadowy concession to the representative principle would have enabled an unwilling Prince to plead that he had duly honoured his bond. But more sinister was the fact that the Act allowed each of the signatories to decide at his discretion when this shadowy

representation should take effect. In the original draft, Article 13 stipulated that constitutions "shall be" introduced within a year. The word "shall" was later altered to "will," and the time-limit was expunged. The omission of a date was not accidental; on the contrary, it was a plain intimation that in a matter upon which they were greatly divided in opinion the rulers did not intend to be unduly hurried. As the provision ran, they would have been within their rights had they delayed the issue of constitutions until the eve of doomsday. Taken literally, therefore, this provision of the Act did not imply a formal pledge or promise; it was at the most the voluntary assertion of a vague and indeterminate principle, and an admission that this principle ought at some convenient season – to be chosen by each ruler for himself – to be applied. There is no need, and perhaps no justification, to assume that the provision was given an illusory form in bad faith; the fact remains, however, that it afforded a convenient loophole for the evasion of a disagreeable surrender to popular expectations and that many of the Princes made a perfidious use of it.

For more than a decade the German peoples had been engaged in repelling an arbitrary dictatorship imposed from without. Henceforth they were to contend against the despotisms which still lingered at home. Nowhere was this struggle so severe as in Prussia. War, besides being a great leveller, is a great educator, and the War of Liberation wrought a surprising change in the political ideas of the Prussian people. Their active participation in the struggle gave to them the consciousness of a new position and stake in the country; the men who had before been subjects now felt and thought as citizens; Prussia had become their fatherland in a fuller and deeper sense than before. In country and in town a new sense of freedom had come to the people – in the former with the promulgation of Stein's Edict of Emancipation of October, 1807, abolishing serfdom and other feudal institutions, in the latter with the introduction of his Municipal Ordinance of 1808, establishing a liberal system of self-government in the old provinces of the kingdom. Moreover, the fact that a law of September 3, 1814, imposed upon the manhood of the nation the obligatory duty of military service seemed to justify the people's claim that with this duty should go, hand in hand, the right to share in the government of the country which they were expected to defend.

Thus it was that liberation from an outside outside yoke gave an impetus to the desire for liberation at home. Hence as soon as the tumult of war had died down there arose on every hand a call for greater political freedom, and the concession of the constitutional privileges which were enjoyed already by Western nations. The eyes of the reformers of that day were turned particularly to England. Stein, Schön, and other Prussian statesmen had carefully and admiringly studied the political institutions of that country, and while not wishing to follow them slavishly, they had English parliamentary life in view in all their proposals to supersede autocratic by constitutional government. So it was with all the popular leaders of the day. Dahlmann, the historian, who identified himself devotedly with the reform movement, saw in England, and not in revolutionary France, the ideal State. "Here," he wrote in 1815, "are most purely developed and preserved the foundations of the constitution towards which all new European nations are striving." The poet Rückert, in an outburst of political enthusiasm, sang –

O build we now a temple
On Albion's example!

Not without cause did England become for the reactionaries of Prussia from that time forward the hated symbol of political progress; honest in their prejudices, they have ever seen in her only a disturber of their country's peace and a menace to its conservative traditions.

Earnest and insistent as was the call for a new start in political life, the call fell in most of the States upon ears deaf to the dictates either of duty or of wisdom. Directly the danger was overpast, most of the Sovereigns ignored their pledges. The only exceptions occurred amongst those of the South and West, the portions of Germany which under French influence had imbibed Liberal ideas. Thus it was not to the Great Powers but to the minor States that Germany owed the first measure of release from political despotism and the beginnings of constitutional life. The ruler of Weimar, the enlightened Karl August, led the way in 1816, and Würtemberg, Bavaria, Nassau and Baden followed soon afterwards. It was in the smaller States also that the strongest desire for national unity existed.

Nowhere was the restored autocracy more stiff-necked, nowhere were national expectations more cruelly disappointed, than in Prussia. At the close of the War of Liberation, Prussia seemed for a short time

to be marked out as the hope of Germany and of the national movement. Every far-seeing friend of unity knew, however, that it was only by meeting Liberal ideas frankly and freely that Prussia would be acceptable to the other States. From Austria, sundered by conflicting races and religious differences, her politics incorporating the worst spirit of reaction, nothing good was to be expected. Thus Prussia seemed to have a golden opportunity of seizing the leadership of Germany by boldly identifying herself with the constitutional cause and national aspirations. Self-interest seemed to point to the wisdom of such a policy. The kingdom had just been extended by the addition of provinces which were not only overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, so modifying the essentially Protestant basis of the State, but which under Napoleon's rule had learned to appreciate the freer spirit of French political institutions. A national parliament would have furnished a rallying-ground upon which internal diversities might have been reconciled for all time. Moreover, the best part of the nation was behind the popular movement, whose leaders and spokesmen were neither violent men nor doctrinaires; among them were, indeed, statesmen like Stein, Hardenberg, Humboldt, Niebuhr, and Vincke, publicists like Arndt, Sehön, and Dahlmann, and even generals like Blücher and Gneisenau. The last of these men anticipated in 1814 words which were constantly on the lips of all the most progressive of German statesmen when, over a generation later, Prussia had once more to choose which way she would go: "Prussia must henceforth, by the liberality of her principles, exercise a moral attraction upon the rest of Germany."

States and nations, like individuals, have their opportunities and chances, to take or to leave. Fate, in offering them, has done its duty; it never reasons or compels, and seldom renews a privilege once rejected. At the beginning of last century Prussia might have chosen to become not merely the political but the spiritual leader of all Germany. The call to this high distinction was disregarded, and if Germany suffered as a result, the loss to Prussia herself was greater. It is usually profitless to speculate upon the "might have beens" of political history, yet it is justifiable to believe that if Prussia a hundred years ago, resolutely emancipating herself from Austrian influence, had decided to place herself at the head of the liberal movement in Germany, a whole crop of subsequent problems and disasters might

have been avoided. Against a liberalized Prussia the Austria of Metternich could not have competed for that "moral conquest of Germany" which was awaiting the coming of the moral conqueror. But Frederick William III was at heart a despot with a weakling's will; distrustful of his people and not less so of himself, suspecting in every liberal idea the germ of revolution, he allowed the precious opportunity to pass by, and so hardened the tradition of Prussian autocracy that not one of his successors has wholly cast it aside.

His surrender to reaction was the less creditable because it was accompanied by a flagrant breach of faith. During the war he had solemnly promised the nation, in recognition of its unparalleled sacrifices, direct participation in State affairs. Shortly before the signing of the convention of the Princes of June 8, 1815, he had renewed that promise in an explicit form. Yielding to the pressure of Hardenberg and other Liberal advisers who for the moment had influence over him, he issued an edict on May 22nd, ordering that a "representation of the nation" should be formed by the development of the provincial estates. From these was to be elected a national assembly, whose function it should be to "deliberate upon all subjects of legislation affecting the personal and property rights of the citizens, including taxation." The edict also ordered the appointment of a commission for the purpose of organizing the intended assembly and drawing up its constitution, and this body was to meet on September 1st. Here, again, there was no definite promise of a popular legislature, nor yet of a legislature at all in the proper sense of the word, but the issue of the law seemed at least to be a sign that the King was mindful of his pledge. But the hopes thus aroused were destined to be short-lived. In June a commission, consisting of twenty-two members of the Council of State, was appointed to make a grand inquest of the nation. Instead of calling witnesses to Berlin, the King resolved that three Ministers should act as travelling commissioners, visiting the provinces and collecting evidence on the spot, just as the Elector Joachim I had done in 1525, when he was bent on reforming the system of local government. Their inquiries were confined almost exclusively to the landed nobility – in other words, to the representatives of existing conditions, and for the most part these men asked for no change; the provincial assemblies were for them both satisfactory and sufficient. Only the Polish aristocracy recognized the

need of a higher form of representation, capable of reflecting the mind of the nation at large.

Yet all the work of the commissioners was wasted. No sooner had their reports been submitted than the King changed his mind. The reactionary influences which, when they did not surround him in the council chamber, lurked in the antechambers, were set busily in motion. The dishonest cry of "The throne in danger!" was raised by unprincipled men whose only concern was to preserve their own illicit influence over the King. Patriotic leaders of the nation were secretly denounced as enemies of the State. The entire popular movement was represented as but a deep design for subverting the monarchy and setting up a republic in its place. Statesmen who had fallen into the background while Liberal tendencies seemed to be in the ascendant, courtiers skilled in exploiting the prejudices and weakness of a ruler who always held the last word as of more account than the first, the spokesmen of an invertebrate bureaucracy, which had no other wish than to be left alone in comfortable indolence – all these and other pillars of a corrupt and discredited political system joined hands in an unseemly plot to incite the King to perfidy and to defeat a loyal nation's ardent desires. They succeeded only too well. An orgy of reaction now set in. Before the close of the year 1815 the King had put out of his mind any idea of a concession to popular aspirations, and was wondering how he could have been so unwise as to contemplate it. The national representation was not created, nor was its constitution drawn up.

In all these sinister movements the master-hand of Metternich was seen. Having successfully thwarted the constitutional aspirations of the time, not by the open and straightforward method of binding the Sovereigns and Governments to an attitude of flat resistance, but more astutely by uniting them in the acceptance of a vague and shadowy promise of concessions which could be lightly ignored, all his efforts were now directed towards the one task of pressing Germany back into the morass of political obscurantism out of which she had seemed for a moment to have rescued herself. Understanding the conditions of this task better than his tools and dupes, he saw that reaction would be the more certain just in proportion as he succeeded in winning the States for a policy of inaction. That may have been the secret of the calculated omission of any reference whatever to times and seasons in

the article of the Federal Act of June 8, 1815, which dealt with the future government of Germany. He knew that the nation was tired out, exhausted, incapable of organizing resistance, still less of making resistance effective. Moreover, everywhere material occupations were making urgent calls upon its attention; the lost prosperity had to be retrieved, the harm done by war and long preoccupation with military employments to be made good, trade and industry to be rehabilitated, the decayed towns to be rebuilt and the waste places restored. It was not difficult, therefore, to draw the Governments into the paths of reaction; with few exceptions those which at first were in a mood to hold back yielded to pressure or to their own doubts and apprehensions.

It was not long before the small and even the secondary States were to perceive, to their humiliation and chagrin, how little they counted, how little they were intended to count, in a political union which yet was broadly based on the principle of parity. It is true that each of the States, however petty, had nominally retained complete political independence; but for that reservation Metternich cared little, so long as he was able to dictate their attitude in the Federation. It was his policy to bring them all into line as members of the Diet, and there make them for federal purposes the servitors of Austria.

Baron von Blittersdorff, Baden's envoy at Frankfort, said: "A hundred times in Vienna I have asked Prince Metternich what it was he really wished to make of the Federation, but could never secure a definite answer." The reason was that the answer could not be put into definite words. Yet the objects of Metternich were never for a moment uncertain. He intended so to rule the Federation as to make it a bulwark against Liberalism and nationalist movements of every kind. It was to be used as a weapon against internal even more than external enemies, against inside political even more than outside military aggression, against intellectual conquests even more than conquests by the sword. Above all, he was determined that the Federation should not prove a step on the way to German unity. There was logic in this attitude, for he knew well that the Empire which he served – and served faithfully according to his lights – made up as it was of so many ethnical elements, would crumble to pieces if ever the ferment of nationalism gained a strong hold upon its inflammable peoples.

Not only, therefore, were popular movements and aspirations to be crushed in the nation, but sympathy with them in the Diet was to be suppressed. Accordingly, Metternich never rested until that body had been purged of all the envoys who failed to fall in with his reactionary aims. The rigid censorship enforced outside was applied to the Diet itself. Books might not be admitted into its library without being first approved by the envoy of the State from which they were issued; even the right of petition was subjected to the censorship, in order that the Diet might not be troubled by importunate memorials unawares.

From the beginning of 1816 blow after blow rained upon the democratic movement in Germany. Newspapers attached to the constitutional cause were suppressed; the innocent *Tugendbund*, or League of Virtue, of Königsberg, a society of high-minded loyalists, formed for purely ethical purposes, was dissolved; it became an offence to be a patriot and a crime to advocate national unity. No public reference to the question of unity was allowed; every symbol of nationality and the national cause was proscribed; even the display of the tricolour of the old Empire, black, red, and gold, was made a penal offence, and the surest way into prison was to go about the street in a black coat, a red waistcoat, and a straw hat. The tyranny of Napoleon had been destroyed, but another tyranny had taken its place, one far more odious and dangerous than the old, since its victims were the minds and spirits of men.

While the hopes of the ripe manhood of the country, of the men who so recently had borne the burden and stress of the struggle with Napoleon, were thus dashed to the ground, an outrage, even more violent, was done to national aspirations by the forcible suppression of the idealistic movement in favour of unity which began amongst the academic youth of the land in 1815. Fichte had passed away, but his eloquent and fervent *Addresses to the German Nation* had not been spoken in vain. The immediate purpose of the Addresses, the emancipation of the German States from a foreign yoke, had been attained, but the task of uniting these States in a single father land remained to be achieved. It was in order to help forward this great work that the students of Germany organized the *Burschenschaft*, emblem at once of the unity of learning and that unity of the nation which it was to be their aim to realize. Each university became, in some degree, a centre of a national movement of moral, as well as

political, regeneration. The old students' associations were usually formed on the basis of State or tribe, and represented particularism in its most acute form, so that the students of any one of the larger universities organized themselves in almost as many groups as the political territories from which they came. Moreover, their purposes were in the main social, where they were not outspokenly convivial, and only seldom did they seriously concern themselves with the claims of the higher life.

The *Burschenschaft* was conceived in the idealistic spirit of Fichte. It was an all-German organization, in which the common aspirations after liberty and unity were to find free and powerful expression. It was not deliberately designed as a political society, for its founders were young and naïve enough to think that in their emancipated new Germany liberty and unity were not party but national aims, and hence were outside the sphere of controversy. The heart of the movement was Jena, once the home of Fichte, happy under the rule of the most liberal-minded Prince of his day. To signalise the growing strength of the *Burschenschaft* a national festival of its members was arranged at the Wartburg, and there some hundreds of students, with many of their professors, assembled from all parts of Germany on October 18, 1817. There was much fervid oratory, much exchanging of vows and protestations, and at the end of the day, remembering how Luther had burned the Pope's Bull at Wittenberg, the students did honour to the genius of the place by a bonfire in which various symbols of the powers of darkness against which they were warring were committed to the flames – a pigtail, symbolical of conventionality: a corset, symbolical of stiff-necked pedantry: a corporal's cane, symbolical of tyranny: and a number of books obnoxious to the national party, including the new Prussian Police Code and Kotzebue *History of the German Empire*, symbolical of the spirit of reaction in general.

This demonstration of the students gave rise to incomprehensible apprehensions and alarms. From all sides vigorous protests reached the easy-going Grand Duke of Weimar, who had permitted the enormity; more than one German Government urged him to make an example of the offenders and to keep a vigilant eye on Jena for the future. Urged by his reactionary advisers, to whom he had more and more handed over his judgment, the King of Prussia now determined

that the time had come for ridding himself altogether of his deferred promise of a constitution, and in a Cabinet Order of March 12, 1818, he formally announced that the time was unfavourable for any measure of the kind. The effect of this open proclamation of faithlessness and ingratitude was to create widespread disappointment and resentment in Liberal circles, high and low. Stein had set his heart upon a constitution, for the creation of a national parliament was to have been the fitting crown of the work which he had begun in the reorganization of local government, and the King's repudiation of his pledges deeply distressed him. "The King," he wrote," regards the present moment as unsuitable; since feelings are excited, it is advisable to wait for a quieter time! But will feelings be quieted by disappointing the just hopes based on Federal Acts, edicts, and promises manifold, or delaying their fulfilment?" The French, the Belgians, the Swedes, the Poles, he added, were found worthy of constitutions – only the Prussians were not.

Prussia's moral reputation in Germany sank at this time lower than ever before. The Governments of the more backward States were delighted to see Frederick William III dance the Viennese waltz to the music of Metternich. On the other hand, those States in which constitutions had already been introduced deplored the King's act as one of moral treason, and now abandoned any hope of seeing Prussia lead Germany in progressive ways.

Then in March, 1819, there was perpetrated one of those senseless crimes which have so often soiled the fame of good causes and obstructed the path of political advance. This was the assassination of Kotzebue by the Bavarian student Karl Sand at Mannheim. Kotzebue was a voluminous writer of indifferent plays, who had prostituted his talents to political espionage and was known to be in the pay of Russia, while his murderer was a youth of highly-strung temperament and unbalanced judgment, yet of orderly life, an ardent patriot, and an enthusiastic "Burschenschafter." Sand appears to have been convinced that he had a special mission to remove the enemy of the commonwealth, and if he took the life of the ob noxious informer he at least tried to take his own, and mangled himself terribly in the act. He was kept alive in prison for a long time in suffering, and as soon as his doctors could be persuaded to certify his fitness for the scaffold he was duly decapitated. Had the matter ended there, Germany would

have been spared much shame. Politically, the only significance of the crime lay in the fact that popular opinion condemned the Governments almost as much as the murderer, and that Sand's fellow-students applauded his act as one of patriotism. The idea that it was part of a deeply laid conspiracy against order was busily exploited, but without the slightest justification.

To Metternich, however, the crime came as a blessing in disguise, for he could point to it as a justification of the measures which had already been taken by the reactionary Governments and use it as a whip wherewith to lash the laggards to heel. Everywhere known or suspected "democrats" were brought under the rigours of a vicious and vindictive police law. Many men of influence and eminence were banished, still more were imprisoned, and others were placed under police control like felons of the lowest order. Arndt, the professor of history, who had done so much to stimulate the patriotic movement in the dark years preceding Napoleon's fall, was kept in prison for three years, while his persecutors tried in vain to discover some offence of which he could be decently convicted. When he was at last liberated for want of incriminating evidence, he was refused permission to return to his university chair at Bonn, and he continued unrobed for twenty years, until a new ruler came to the Prussian throne. The theologian Schleiermacher was similarly removed from his chair at Berlin. Gneisenau, Blücher's valued colleague, was disgraced for daring to hold Liberal sentiments and was placed under police observation. "Father" Jahn, the founder of the German gymnastic clubs, was arrested at his father's deathbed and hurried off to gaol for no offence at all. At the universities, espionage, denunciation, and petty persecution were the lot of professors and students alike. Friedrich List, the economist and the father of modern Protection and the railway system in Germany, fled from his native Würtemberg rather than face imprisonment for a trivial political offence, an honest and much needed public criticism of the bureaucracy of that State. When he returned, trusting to the clemency of his Sovereign, he was promptly apprehended and kept two years at forced clerical labour – the transcription of accounts. The time soon came when it became a crime to publish in Prussia Fichte *Addresses to the German Nation*.

Not satisfied with the measures which they took on their own account to suppress Liberal ideas, the Sovereigns and Governments

resolved, at a conference held at Carlsbad in August 1819, to organize this campaign of persecution on more systematic and more drastic lines. All the larger States were represented, and the resolutions adopted were soon afterwards presented by Austria and Prussia to the Federal Diet, and by that body were promptly endorsed. The result was the issue of the Carlsbad Decrees for the repression of democratic movements. It rested with the federated Governments to accept and enforce the Decrees with modifications of their own; in many of the States their severity was increased, in few was it relaxed.

Everywhere the Press was subjected to rigorous control; books and pamphlets were placed under an intolerant censorship; political agitation by association, assembly, and public speech was relentlessly suppressed; the *Burschenschaften* were dissolved; and a tribunal was set up for the trial and punishment of treason, only to make itself ridiculous, because it proved impossible to find traitors. So far did interference with intellectual liberty go that it was required that in every university a Government commissary or proctor should be appointed, charged with the duty of spying upon the teaching and opinions of the professors, preventing the formation of student associations, and in general of keeping the educated youth of the nation in order. In a word, despotism set its iron heel upon every manifestation of Liberalism, whether in act or utterance. Furthermore, the provisions of the Final Act of the Vienna Congress relating to the introduction of constitutional assemblies were now, in effect, cancelled.

When the order to enforce the federal resolutions came to the Prussian Ministry from the Diet in Frankfort, Humboldt and two other Ministers of like mind and courage sent a protest to the King, declaring them to be “shameful, unnational, and provocative for a thinking people.” The King replied that the resolutions were meant to be enforced, and enforced they should be. A little later Humboldt and his too fastidious colleagues resigned, Humboldt refusing, by way of more emphatic protest, to accept the pension of £300 a year to which he was entitled.

For a long time there were few safe places in Germany for either Liberalism or liberty. The intellectual atmosphere of the country was poisoned by the miasma of political intolerance, bigotry, and dishonesty. The flatterer, the time-server, the apostate, and their kind

flourished; upright men hid their heads in shame, or, raising them, were smitten down by the cowardly blow of the renegade and the informer. Prussia, in particular, was overrun with spies, whose business it was to hunt out political disaffection or incite to it. The despicable Schmalz had been decorated by Frederick William III several years before for his activity in this unseemly work. Now the foundations were laid of the vicious system of "denunciation" which became the dishonour of German criminal law, and which still flourishes to-day like a green bay-tree. The whole political development of Germany was demoralized and retarded not only by the clumsy and repressive measures to which the Decrees gave rise, but even more by "the secret political struggle to which the members of the Federation were incited amongst and against themselves" owing to the operation of these vicious edicts.

The obnoxious Decrees of Carlsbad continued in force for nearly twenty years, and their spirit dominated the home politics of Germany during the whole of that time and long after. The philosophical historian of German political movements, when he appears, may find in the operation of the Decrees the solution to some of the most marked peculiarities of party relationships in Germany. The Decrees helped to consolidate the Liberal party, but they did more. Treitschke, renegade as a historian to his early generous sentiments, is seldom just to German Liberalism and its parliamentary advocates of any epoch, yet he admits that the Liberals were made an anti-Government party against their will. Two courses only were open to them: either to abandon ingloriously the fight for free thought, free opinion, and the ideal of national unity by national liberty, or to rank themselves openly as a party of opposition. They chose the latter way, which ever afterwards proved a way of odium and contumely, except when, in moments of sheer lassitude and exhaustion, they were willing to buy temporary peace and favour by surrender of principle. Having armed itself with this powerful weapon, henceforth the Diet found little more, and nothing more congenial, to do than to fight against the liberty and unity of the German nation. In his determination to show no quarter to Liberal tendencies, Metternich did not hesitate to manipulate the federal law. On the proposal of individual States the Diet was to be empowered to alter the constitutions of those States, even to the extent of prohibiting the publication of parliamentary

proceedings. Here Prussia, herself steeped in reaction, faithfully aided Austria in her dark designs. Thus by a stroke of the pen the independent sovereignty guaranteed to all the allies, great and small, by the Act of Federation was practically annulled. On December 23, 1823, the Diet went to the length of passing a resolution to the effect that even in its own proceedings no appeal should be made to principles and doctrines at variance with the existing basis of the Federation.

Amongst the secondary States, Bavaria and Würtemberg seemed for a time to resent the arrogance of the dictator and his policy. Each of these States regarded itself as the heart of "pure Germany," and both were agreed that neither Austria nor Prussia could be considered German at all. It was at this time that the idea of the Triad, frequently revived in later years, but never realized, originated in Würtemberg. It was a project for the formation of a federation of the secondary States, under Bavaria's leadership, as a counterpoise to Austria and Prussia. Baron von Wangenheim, the Würtemberg envoy, succeeded so far as to create in the Diet a combination – an *entente* or diplomatic group, as it would have been called in later times – which for a time worked independently and was able to exercise a certain amount of effective obstruction. King William of Würtemberg even ventured to take up an attitude of open hostility to the major Powers, but was promptly ostracized by both. The only earnest resistance to the reactionary movement came from some of the smaller States, but, because supported only by moral force, it failed to deter or impress.

When finally all its Liberal members had been either extruded or suppressed, the Diet became more than ever an Austrian committee. The Austrian president even claimed and exercised the right to keep its archives, and these, studiously guarded, were only thrown open for inspection by the other envoys at his discretion. The triumph of Metternich was consummated when the time came for renewing the Carlsbad Decrees, which in the first instance had been promulgated for five years. Without demur the federal Governments agreed to these symbols of darkness being made a permanent part of the armoury of autocracy in its struggle with democracy. Weary of isolation, and wishful to rehabilitate himself in the esteem of his more powerful neighbours, even the King of Würtemberg now made no open protest.

In 1824 the reactionary publicist Gentz could write with truth of

the effects of the Austrian Chancellor's policy: "The revolutionary system henceforth can only gain the upper hand in Germany if the Germanic Federation itself succumbs." The arrogance of Metternich reached a height almost sublime when, having obtained from the Diet all that he wanted, he advised it, in 1828, to adjourn indefinitely, since there remained no longer anything for it to do. In the hour of this triumph of reaction Austria's power in Germany seemed to be at its zenith. Well might her Chancellor boast, "If the Emperor doubts that he is Emperor of Germany, he errs greatly." And yet in proportion as Austria was strong in Germany, Germany was weak in Europe. Not in the time of the moribund Empire did she stand lower in the council of the nations or mean less to the life of Europe than during these years of political languor and stagnation.

The retrograde policy followed by Austria and Prussia in Germany was reflected in their attitude towards European affairs in general. By a convention of November, 1815, the four Powers forming the Grand Alliance – England and Russia, together with the major German States – had agreed to confer periodically upon questions affecting the peace of the Continent. The conferences or congresses of Aix-la-Chapelle (1818), Troppau (1820), Laibach (1821), and Verona (1822) were held in pursuance of this arrangement. On all these occasions the influence of Austria, and of Prussia in sympathy, was exerted wholly on the side of reaction. To Metternich the Concert of the Powers was merely a device for placing Europe under the same system of police surveillance which he had succeeded in imposing upon Germany. To him every stirring of national feeling was a challenge to conflict between the principles of order and revolution as defined by the dominant autocracies. In all the measures, now passive, now active, for the repression of nationalist movements or Liberal aspirations – in Spain and Portugal, in Naples and Greece – Austria was the ringleader, while Prussia meekly did her bidding.

When finally, at the Congress of Verona, Great Britain parted company from her unsympathetic yoke-fellows over the question of Spain, and the Grand Alliance was broken up, there still remained to carry on the crusade against democratic ideas Czar Alexander I's fantastic creation, the Holy Alliance. Formed likewise in 1815, this Alliance professed to pursue aims not merely idealistic but religious; in practice it soon degenerated into a league for the subjection of

political thought and the thwarting of constitutional progress. Peace was declared, and truly declared, to be the supreme purpose of the Allies, but the peace which they desired was to be obtained by fastening upon Continental nations the existing political systems and vetoing all changes which would have weakened autocratic power; it was to be a peace purchased at the price of intellectual stagnation and inertia. More and more, after the passing of the Carlsbad Decrees, Eastern Europe, as represented by Russia, Austria, and Prussia, and Western Europe, as represented by Great Britain and France, went apart, the former perpetuating the petrified formulas of autocracy, the latter carrying forward the vital and vivifying doctrines of liberty and progress.

Lord Palmerston, who to the last was never loath to strike a blow at despotism, and who with a justifiable egoism counted amongst his "many good works" the assistance which he gave to down-trodden nations to rid themselves of corrupt government, faithfully defined this fundamental antagonism both of ideas and policies when he wrote in 1836: "Every day brings fresh proof of the complete union of the three (Eastern) Powers in every question of European policy, and affords additional evidence that they are for the present what they told us three years ago they must be considered, viz. a unity. . . . The three Powers fancy their interests lie in a direction opposite to that which we and France conceive ours to be placed. The separation is not of words but of things. . . . The three and the two think differently, and therefore they act differently."

No other serious attempt to redeem the pledges of 1815 was made in Prussia during the reign of Frederick William III. During 1819 Hardenberg himself drew up the outlines of a constitution based on the representation of the existing estates. It is true that the document ended with the excellent sentiment, "*Salus publica suprema lex esto*!" yet for all that, Stein's reproach that Hardenberg offered "liberal phrases and despotic realities" was well founded. "Why cannot we work together?" Hardenberg had asked of Stein. The reason was that the two were pulling different ways. All that this scheme proposed was that a "general" diet should be elected by the provincial assemblies out of the privileged classes of which they were composed; it was to be allowed to consider and report on legislative proposals put before it by the Ministry, but the King reserved an unconditional

veto, as well as undivided executive power. With all its deficiencies, however, the scheme was too liberal for the King, and he refused to proceed with it. Two years later the King, by Cabinet Order, declared that any further proposals of the kind must be left to his "paternal solicitude, to be determined according to time, experience, and the development of events." It was a sign that he had done with the question for good and all. All this time, and to the end of the reign, Prussian policy was dictated by Austria: the astute Metternich was for practical purposes Chancellor in Berlin as well as in Vienna, and the irony of the situation lay in the fact that in Prussia, as Beust remarks, "no one dreamt of finding in that circumstance anything derogatory."

The harsh pressure of the Carlsbad Decrees and the other coercive measures enforced in the same spirit made any effective co-operation for political purposes for many years impossible. Hence it was that the Paris Revolution of July, 1830, received at first but little response in Germany. There was popular restlessness in the States of the South, and in Brunswick the illiberal Duke was driven from his palace and deposed; several new constitutions were hastily granted – in Saxony, Hanover, Hesse-Cassel, and elsewhere; but in Prussia, except in the Rhine Province, there was no stirring. But for the provocative action of the Federal Diet the crisis might have passed without further trouble, for all the democrats asked was that constitutional government should be introduced where it did not already exist. Meeting at Frankfort in November, however, the Governments called for the further restriction of the Press, undertook to meet revolutionary movements with a severer hand, and pledged to each other military assistance in quelling every attempt at active disturbance. Other irritating measures of repression succeeded, until finally an open attack made by the Diet upon the constitutional rights of the State legislatures gave the signal for insurrectionary outbreaks in various parts of the country.

A national demonstration, held in May, 1832, at Hambach, in the Bavarian Palatinate, called for the unification of Germany on a democratic basis. In the following April an attempt was made to overthrow the Diet of Frankfort, and the more impetuous members of the revolutionary party united in a secret organization whose purpose was a general rising, which was to issue in the establishment of a republic for all Germany. The answer of the Diet was summary and

sharp. Agitation was repressed with a drastic hand, freedom of speech was abrogated, the publication of parliamentary debates was restricted, and the universities were subjected to a humiliating censorship. The example of the Diet was not lost upon individual Sovereigns. When, in 1837, Hanover became separated from the British Crown, the King, Ernest August, celebrated the event by annulling the constitution. Seven Göttingen professors, among them Dahlmann, Gervinus, and the brothers Grimm, publicly protested against the act as an outrage upon the German nation, and were promptly removed from their offices. An appeal to the Frankfort Diet to interfere in the interest of legality and right was treated with disdain.

With the death of Frederick William III in 1840 and the succession of his son Frederick William IV, the repression in Prussia, which had been enforced with a *crescendo* of vigour and rigour ever since 1815, was relaxed. Many of the proscribed patriots who had fallen into disgrace were restored to home and office, amongst them Arndt, who returned to his university work; the Press laws were relaxed; the holding of political opinions which did not bear the official stamp no longer ranked as a crime; and the nation altogether breathed more freely. For a time it even seemed likely that the long-promised constitution was about to be given. But the new King had inherited a bad tradition, and later events did not substantiate the first promise of his reign. Like his father, he was warmly attached to Austria and to Austrian policy in political matters. For some years he played with both the question of constitutional government and that of national unity, and a revolution in Berlin was needed to rouse him to serious action. A man of parts and of the best intentions, Frederick William IV was yet hopelessly unpractical. Idealist, mystic, dreamer, orator, and in everything artist, he was singularly ill-fitted to adorn the royal council chamber; for most of his virtues and all his gifts were just those which a king is better without. His gift of language in particular amounted to a misfortune; wherever he went he made speeches, eloquent, rich in beautiful phrases, but devoid of practical wisdom. He was given also to romanticism, and with this dangerous trait went a weak religiosity. First regarded with lenient toleration, his extravagances in time began to pall upon the taste of his people, who deemed that a Hohenzollern ruler should be made of sterner stuff.

Arnold Ruge and Ernst Echtermeyer issued in the *Hallesche Jahrbücher* a "Manifesto against Romanticism," aimed directly at the King and his creatures, and David Strauss ridiculed the royal aberration obliquely yet more vivaciously in a satire entitled *The Romanticist on the Throne of the Cæsars*. In political matters he clung to a mystical belief in monarchy as divine and in Kings as literally vicegerents of the Ruler of the Universe. It was impossible that a mind like his should be receptive of modern ideas. "King and people," said the contemporary Liberal politician Hermann von Beckerath, "spoke wholly different languages and lived in different centuries." He was in truth a complete anachronism; his age, his world, his ideals lay in the past; and he stalked upon the modern stage furtively, uneasily, aimlessly, as though conscious that he was out of place, like a shade that had lost its way.

Frederick William IV could not have succeeded in satisfying the just political expectations of the people, however honestly he had tried; it was inevitable that he should, in perfect good faith, offer to the nation shams for realities and be convinced that he had done his duty. In 1842 he caused to be formed committees of estates which were to serve as a representative assembly, and he was bitterly disappointed that the nation did not share his belief in their sufficiency. To his disgust, some of the provincial Diets, which had seemed to be bulwarks of conservatism, now began to petition for a constitution, for greater freedom for the Press, for trial by jury, and other demands in the charter of popular liberties. "Am I not bound, as an upright man, to fulfil my father's promise?" he asked in 1845 of his Minister von Bülow, in reference to the constitutional question. He had been on the throne five years when this obligation began to trouble him, yet two years more were to pass before he decided to act seriously. In 1847 he moved, and by patent of February 3rd, which was signed by his brother, the Prince of Prussia, and all his Ministers, he convened the United Diet, a pseudo-parliament of two chambers or *curiæ*, one the Diet proper, composed of the members of the Provincial Diets, and the other an upper chamber composed of seventy-two nobles and landed proprietors chosen by the King, chiefly from the Provincial Diets. It was not a legislature and was not intended to be one: it had no powers independently of the royal will; it had no right of decision, it might discuss only the questions referred to it; in fine, it

was intended simply to sit and look at the King while he legislated for the country as before on the old Cabinet Ordinance system.

The King himself opened this assembly on April 11th with a grandiloquent oration in which he declared that "Prussia's destinies can only be directed by one will, and that will must be the King's," and that "No power on earth shall compel me to change the immediate relationship between me and my people into a constitutional relationship." Holding these opinions, it was not clear why the King should have convened the Diet at all. Its creation was, indeed, an unintended admission that the system of autocracy was obsolete and indefensible, but the system proposed in substitution pleased no one. Chagrin and embitterment followed disappointment; Liberalism regarded itself as once more betrayed; and political agitation redoubled in intensity. After the Diet had itself pronounced condemnation upon its insufficiency, nothing could redeem it from discredit and the country lost interest in it. The year before (1846) the King had marked his disapproval of democratic government by joining with Austria and Russia in the destruction of the republic of Cracow, as established by the Congress of Vienna, and its incorporation in the first of these States, without consulting any other Powers. Lord Palmerston strongly criticized the lawless act, but it was not actively challenged.

The accumulated disaffection came to a head in 1848. In February the revolutionary spirit which had slumbered in France since 1830 broke out afresh, and its influence was strongly felt throughout Germany, and most of all in the States nearest to the centre of disturbance. Carl Schurz, a German refugee of that time, later an honoured American citizen, tells how, when the news of the proclamation of the second republic and the flight of Louis Philippe to England reached Bonn, where Schurz was studying, the students of the town assembled in the market-place, many bringing with them their harmless rapiers, having a nebulous idea that something had to be done and ready to take their part in doing it. In many parts of Germany the ferment took a more serious character, and there were risings in Prussia, Hanover, Baden, Würtemberg, Bavaria, Hesse-Nassau, and elsewhere. In Hesse, Baden, and Berlin political emissaries and returned refugees quickly forgathered from all the four winds and busily fanned the flames of rebellion. So suddenly had the

thunderbolt fallen that, in spite of all the repressive machinery at their command, the Governments were taken unawares, and before concerted action was possible the revolution had gained the upper hand in the principal seats of disaffection. Prussia, ever stolid and lethargic, responded less readily to the call of Paris than South Germany, yet by the middle of March insurrection had broken out within sight and call of the royal palace in Berlin, where the King and his Ministers, the military, and the police looked on in stupefied inaction while the rebels laid their plans. “When all around everything is seething, I cannot expect that in Prussia alone the popular temper will remain under freezing-point,” the King said philosophically to a deputation of loyal but restive citizens which waited on him to urge the wisdom of making concessions in the spirit of the time.

On March 13th, news arrived from Vienna that the revolution had triumphed there and that Metternich had fallen, fighting to the last. Facing disdainfully a body of students who had forced a way into his official rooms, the old man declared to the Archdukes present, “Forty years I have served my country. I have never yielded to an insurrection, nor will I now.” This insurrection, however, was not as others, and a little later the Minister who had ruled Austria and Germany so long and so despotically was a fugitive, travelling in disguise to England, the one sure refuge, in those troublous times, of political exiles, revolutionary and reactionary alike.

Disturbed out of his accustomed apathy, the King, on the 18th, issued another patent, promising a Liberal constitution and the reform of the Germanic Federation, and he repeated the promise from the balcony of his castle in the hearing of a large crowd gathered below. The announcement was received with delight, as denoting the “bloodless victory of the revolution,” and all might have gone well had not two shots rung out – whence coming or whither going was never made clear. Suspecting the work of traitors, the crowd gave way to transports of anger; at once the fateful cry “To the barricades!” was raised; and in a short time the streets of Berlin were arrayed as for siege. The army of the revolution was composed of many elements of the population – the bad were there as well as the good; but all were inspired by the same firm resolution to fight out the struggle for constitutional liberty in such a way that it would not have to be fought out again. The troops threw themselves into the fray with loyal

energy, and for the rest of the day and until far into the night civil war reigned, and a large part of the city had been wrecked before a truce was called. Day-dawn saw upon the walls a proclamation of the King to his "dear Berliners." "Hear the paternal voice of your King, inhabitants of my faithful and beautiful Berlin," ran this document; "forget what has happened, as I from my heart will forget it, for the sake of the great future which will, with God's blessing of peace, open up for Prussia and through Prussia for Germany." The proclamation made no impression upon the incredulous populace, which now had gained the upper hand.

Topsy-turvydom reigned in Berlin in those furious March days. Instead of giving orders, the King received them; instead of commanding, the administrative authorities obeyed. A deputation waited on the King on the 19th, and promised that if the military were withdrawn peace and quiet should be definitely restored. The King agreed, and the entire garrison was sent outside the city. Many officers wept with rage as they rode away. It was a physical as well as a moral victory for rebellion, for now the insurrectionaries came into complete control of the city and all it contained. There was violence but no robbery; some public property was destroyed, but private chattels were left unharmed. More than two hundred people had fallen to the fire of the soldiery and in order to bring home to the King the late murderous work, the bodies, garlanded with flowers, but with their wounds displayed, were paraded before the royal castle. There the attendant mourners sang the dirge "Jesus, lover of my soul," and demanded the appearance of the King, who came forward bareheaded, leading the Queen on his arm, and delivered a sympathetic oration, after which the procession filed away. On March 21st the King issued another proclamation, addressed this time "to my people and the German nation," declaring for unity under Prussian leadership. "We can only be rescued from our dangers," he said, "by the most intimate union of the German Princes and peoples under one leadership; I take over this leadership so long as the danger lasts. My people, who do not fear the danger, will not forsake me, and Germany will join me in confidence. I have to-day taken the old German colours, and placed my people under the venerable banner of the German Empire. Prussia henceforth is merged in Germany!" To make the declaration more impressive the King rode in procession through the streets of Berlin,

attended by Ministers and Generals, citizens and students, wearing the imperial tricolour. At suitable places a halt was made and the royal orator made speeches to the wondering crowds. “Make a note of it, gentlemen; write it down,” he said to a knot of students who had gathered before the university, “that I usurp nothing and desire nothing save German freedom and unity.” Some cheered, some shook their heads, others scoffed. Never was an empire created so speedily and so easily as that which was talked into existence by Frederick William IV of Prussia on that March day of 1848.

Yet the King was quite sincere, so far as he knew himself. He wanted to be right with his people; he seriously believed that the cause of unity was at that moment in his keeping; and he was convinced that for Germany a new day had dawned. Unfortunately for the national cause, he laboured under a total misapprehension both of his own powers and of his ability to communicate to others his pathetic faith in words. Had Prussia in 1848 had a ruler or even a statesman of commanding influence, genuinely devoted to the cause of national unity and determined to achieve it, it is at least possible that a new German empire might have been established without the wars of 1864, 1866, and 1870, and that German national life might have been fertilized by liberty instead of blood.

Such a leader was not forthcoming, least of all amongst the Princes, who were as jealous and distrustful of each other as of their peoples. Writing to the Prince Consort of England some months before (October 15, 1847), urging the need of such a change in the relations of the German Sovereigns to their lands as would secure the conditions for “a well-organized national existence,” Baron Stockmar had asserted his characteristic faith in reason. “I undertake,” he said, “to demonstrate to every Prince who, being of fair intelligence, is also alive to the duties incumbent upon him as a Sovereign, that this desirable measure of self-reform might be carried into effect under conditions which must redound to the welfare of all, and consequently to the advantage of both governors and governed.” It was, however, just the Princes’ lack of political foresight and of a due sense of responsibility towards their subjects that held Germany back at that time, so opportune as it seemed for a great constitutional forward movement.

In the meantime the Prince of Prussia, who had, perhaps unjustly,

been credited with a wish to repress all popular demonstrations by drastic measures, had been despatched to England. It was said that he went on a special mission to Queen Victoria, but in reality he was deemed safer out of the country until public feeling had abated. He was not the only high-born victim of popular odium who sought refuge there in that time of social upheaval, when so many men of mark were marked men: Louis Philippe and Prince Metternich had arrived before him. Bunsen, the Prussian envoy in London, tells how he appeared at the embassy, unexpected and unannounced, early in the morning of March 27th, and has left a picture, in sober colours, of his two months' life of semi-seclusion in the English capital. On one occasion an armchair was placed for him in the position of honour at the breakfast table, but "the Prince put it away himself and took another, saying, 'One ought to be humble now, for thrones are shaking.'" When he left towards the end of May he told his host that "in no other place or country could he have passed so well the period of distress and anxiety which he had gone through as here, having so much to occupy his mind both in the country and in the nation." One of his first acts on returning to Berlin in June was to take his seat as an elected member of the United Diet which had just been created, for the purpose of making there public avowal of his acceptance of the constitutional *régime*. This he did in a conciliatory speech, which was received by the Conservatives with applause and by the Liberals with silence, after which he withdrew.

The effect of the revolution upon Prussian constitutional development has here only an incidental interest, and it need not detain us long. Now for the first time the King seemed to be in earnest; the constitution which he had hitherto been so slow to grant was produced with astonishing speed, and a constituent Diet was called together in May to consider the details. Then followed the inevitable relapse. The suppression of the revolution in Vienna encouraged him to believe that the democratic movement might be overcome with equal success in Prussia. In November he formed a strong reactionary Ministry, the "Ministry of the saving deed," and proceeded to curtail the deliberations of the Diet, which was still busy upon a draft constitution. As at Frankfort, the democratic party was in the ascendant, and it was proposing to make short work of the accumulation of privilege which had obstructed political progress.

Even a resolution of thanks to the combatants of March 15th and 19th and a declaration that they "deserved well of their country" were lost only by a small number of votes.

Wishing at last to liberate the Diet from the ebullient influence of the Berlin populace, the King declared it removed to Brandenburg. The Liberal majority under Hans von Unruh, however, preferred to continue sitting in the capital, whereupon the King placed Berlin in a state of siege, and on November 13th commissioned General Wrangel, to his unalloyed delight, to eject the deputies from their meeting-place. As the President refused to leave, he was unceremoniously carried into the street upon his chair, the deputies promptly following the symbol of enfeebled authority. Attempts were made to reconstitute the assembly, first in the Town Hall and later in a humble *café*, but from both places it was expelled by the soldiery. Then the outraged politicians shot a last futile bolt by refusing to vote taxes. Nevertheless, the King's high-handed action evoked no violent resentment on the part of the nation at large; the revolution had spent itself, and the people neither rose in protest nor declined to pay their dues. As only a handful of deputies appeared at Brandenburg, the King dissolved the Diet and proceeded to grant a constitution of his own making. This constitution was spoken of as *octroyé* or imposed by the Crown of its free will and motion. It had little in common with the constitutions of free countries, yet as then enacted it continues with hardly a serious modification to the present day.

From this depressing story of the political miscalculations and failures into which the statecraft of Prussia was led under the influence of Metternich, it is a relief to turn to the brighter record of the country's civil and material development. If not startling, this was far from uneventful. One of the most backward of the German States in constitutional life, Prussia was the most advanced in scientific administration. The genius of her rulers and statesmen for order and organization was proverbial, and in grappling with the many difficult problems incidental to a time of national transition and reconstruction in many directions it found a fruitful field of action. Faithless though he was on the constitutional question, Frederick William III was all the more concerned to build up the system of local government. The law establishing provincial Diets, passed in 1823, marked an important break with the old system of administration, which had

combined feudal privilege with arbitrary government from above. Metternich had urged the King to restrict his interpretation of article 13 of the Federal Act to the grant of provincial assemblies, and to establish even these in a "circumscribed form." They were so circumscribed, in fact, that the people at large were excluded from direct participation in their affairs; their sessions were held in secret; and even their proceedings were so jealously withheld from public knowledge that only bald summaries of events were published when the assemblies had dispersed. The chief importance of the new provincial Diets lay in the fact that they were part of a comprehensive scheme of administrative devolution. During the next five years a system of circle Diets was created for the various provinces, so that now – the towns having had self-government since the introduction of Stein's Municipal Ordinance of 1808 – only the later reforms in the administration of the rural communes were needed in order to complete the edifice of local self-government. Another notable domestic reform of the period was the land legislation passed in the interest of the peasant proprietors. Nothing was done for the rural labourers, however, and the condition of comparative servitude established by the early Labour Ordinances suffered no alleviation; substantially these degrading regulations have remained unchanged to the present day.

It was at this time of awakening also that Prussia and other German States laid the broad foundations of their systems of public and technical schools. This enlightened action was the result of a deliberate recognition of the impossibility of competing with other industrial countries, and particularly England, unless the fullest use were made of the aids offered by education and science. Compulsory elementary education had already been introduced in some of the States, and in the second and third decades of the century technical colleges and schools, in the interest of many trades and crafts, sprang up in all parts of the country. Nothing is more creditable to Prussia than the eagerness with which the new movement was taken up by the industrial towns. When in 1824 Berlin set up a technical school, placing at its head the famous pedagogue K. F. von Klöden, other Prussian towns at once followed suit, e.g. Breslau, Stettin, and Elberfeld. Hearing of Berlin's experiment, Goethe wrote: "We are now assured of the comprehensive care with which the Prussian State is

endeavouring to keep pace with the incessant advances in technical methods effected by our neighbours." England, strong in her belief in the "practical man," and scornful of educational enthusiasts, regarded this new departure with cheerful indifference.

Nevertheless, the country's material prosperity was held back by other causes than the presence in the field of earlier and stronger rivals, and one of the principal obstacles was removed when the internal duties and excises, which had acted so injuriously in restraint of trade, were abolished and the enlarged kingdom was made a free market, protected only against undue competition from without by a system of moderate duties.

Here the far-sighted statesmanship of Stein and his associates was abundantly justified by the results. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Prussia was still an agricultural State, no less than 80 per cent. of the inhabitants following pastoral occupations. Hence not only did the country produce food enough for its own use, but it was able to export grain freely. Manufactures were in the main confined to the West, to Silesia, and to Berlin, Magdeburg, and a few other towns, while the most flourishing Prussian ports were Memel, Danzig, Königsberg, and Emden, all but the last situated upon the Baltic. The practice of exclusive trading was carried on as before, and the exchange of merchandise, not only between State and State, but even within the boundaries of the same political territory, was impeded by a grotesque system of duties and dues. There were imposts by land and water, and *octrois* at every town gate, with dues on sales and dues on purchases; and the mischief thus done was aggravated by the monopolies exercised by the Governments and the trade privileges conferred upon corporations and private individuals.

So it was when, after the overthrow of Prussia by Napoleon, Stein and Hardenberg won over a reluctant King to their own firm conviction that Prussia could only be made secure against foreign enemies by being made freer in her own life. From that conviction, and in its spirit, proceeded the series of epoch-making laws and regulations, beginning in 1807, which gave to the economic life of Prussia the relief which it needed, by removing the fetters upon industry, handicraft, trade, and agriculture, and giving scope, for the first time, for the full exercise of the nation's productive powers. "Greater liberty" was Stein's watchword, and the phrase meant for

him much more than for Hardenberg except in the fruitful period of his early enthusiasm. Of the two, Stein was unquestionably the more solid economist. He had studied at the University of Göttingen, at that time and later famous as the special home of the cameral sciences, and while a follower of Adam Smith, he sought to apply Liberalistic ideas, not on any slavish model, but according to the special needs of Prussia. The "Instruction to the Royal Governments of the Prussian Provinces" of December 26, 1808, after emphasizing the principle that industry must be free and no man must be restricted in the choice of a calling, proceeded: –

"Together with this liberty, facility of communication and freedom of trade both at home and abroad are also necessary if our industry, trade, and welfare are to thrive. Freedom of trade and of industry creates the greatest possible competition between the producing and consuming public, and protects the consumers most effectively against scarcity and excessive prices."

That was Stein's economic position in theory. In practice he departed from it, like a wise statesman, just as interest and policy dictated. There is a faithful echo of the Glasgow professor of political economy in Stein's doctrine that "It is not necessary to favour trade; it must simply not be obstructed." In harmony with this doctrine the direct State encouragement of industry and trade ceased for a long time. Rightly or wrongly, it was deemed to be incompatible with the ideal of economic freedom and independence. So long as the State exercised the right to control the movements of its citizens by restrictions upon the choice of trade and occupation, upon migration and residence, it recognized the counter-obligation to act in something like a parental relationship towards every class of the community. When, however, these restrictions were cast aside, the State's direct patronage was forfeited as well. There was less prohibition of exports and imports, but there were also no more bounties and subventions. At that time Prussia had two customs tariffs – one for the agricultural East of the monarchy, devised to meet its special economic conditions and sufficiently protective, and the other for the more industrial West, marked by lower duties.

The reforming work of Stein was continued after his resignation. In his spirit was passed the law of May 26, 1818, "on the customs and excise duties on foreign goods and on trade between the provinces of

the State," which introduced complete freedom of trade within the kingdom, abolished the last of the old prohibitions, and relaxed the remaining restrictions upon foreign trade. "The duties," so ran the preamble, "shall protect home industry by a suitable taxation of foreign trade and the consumption of foreign goods, and shall secure to the State such a revenue as may be possible without impediment to trade." It was the tariff based on this law which received so warm a commendation from the free trade party in the English House of Commons, where in 1825 Huskisson uttered the hope that "the time would come when England would follow Prussia's example." Yet Prussia's fiscal policy was dictated not by preference for any theories of the schools but by motives of self-interest. Since her agriculturists grew corn enough and to spare and her manufacturers were not yet able to supply the needs of the home market, traffic with other countries was a necessity. Nor can it be doubted that this freer mercantile intercourse greatly helped to regenerate the economic life of the country, depressed and disordered as it was by exhausting wars.

A still larger step forward was taken by the reduction and ultimate unification of the customs system of the German States. The two best-known protagonists of a policy of freer trade at that time were Friedrich List, the professor of Tübingen, and Karl Friedrich Nebenius, a Baden statesman, each of whom devoted to the cause an eloquent tongue and a ready pen. Both regarded complete free trade as the ideal to be aimed at, but wished to attain that goal by stages. List in particular was a consistent advocate of the "infant industry" argument for protection. For the present he worked for freedom of trade within the frontiers of Germany as the first and essential condition of advance towards freer international exchange. He expected far more from the increase of commercial intercourse between the various German States than from the wholesale abolition of the customs barriers dividing them from the outer world. Hence his diligent encouragement of railway enterprise, which owed much to his efforts. Several of the large trunk lines transecting Central and South Germany were projected by him.

The first serious attempt to introduce freedom of internal trade throughout Germany, as reorganized by the Federation of 1815, was made in the Federal Diet by Würtemberg in 1817, but it was not well received. Prussia took up the question a little later on her own

account. It was on the question of customs policy that Prussia won her greatest diplomatic success in her early dealings with the other States. The Germanic Federation might not have been intended as a stepping-stone to political unity, but with the increase of commercial intercourse and the development of road and water transport, it was impossible that the States should continue for ever to be independent customs areas, regardless of all considerations of common interest and welfare. Particularism stubbornly held out for a long time, but in the end it was compelled to make to necessity the surrender which it refused to make to patriotism.

Behind the idea of tariff unions and agreements at that time there was not only the pressure of the new industrialism, but the warm advocacy of far-sighted statesmen and men of science. It was owing to the enlightened efforts of Friedrich C. A. Motz, then a provincial lord-lieutenant, that Prussia, in October, 1819, concluded the first tariff convention; and though it was only with the little neighbouring State of Schwarzburg-Sondershausen, it marked a distinct advance. The secondary States were alarmed, and, fearing the extension of Prussian influence, Bavaria invited Würtemberg, Baden, and the two Hesses, with the Thuringian States, to a conference with a view to common action on the same lines, though it led to no immediate practical result. Soon Prussia induced other North German States to join the dual union, and in February, 1828, Motz, now Minister of Finance, scored a triumph when he secured the accession of Hesse-Darmstadt. The month before, Bavaria and Würtemberg had also concluded a customs union of their own.

Now Saxony hatched the ingenious design of coalescing the Mid-German States in a similar union, which was to drive a wedge between north and south and so prevent Prussia from extending her customs conquests further, and this took effect in September of the same year. The design failed of its purpose, however, for, interest proving stronger than jealousy, the northern and southern groups of States concluded, a few months later, a convention in virtue of which reciprocal freedom of trade was introduced within their respective areas. Prussia could now afford to bide her time. She had secured union with the South, and her own large territory and multifarious natural resources and industries made her independent of her small neighbours. It was her policy, therefore, to wait until these hesitant

States had convinced themselves that they had greater need of her than she had of them, and that except under Prussia's leadership a customs union of all Germany would be impossible.

Although it may have been short-sighted, the opposition which Prussia had to encounter on this question cannot be regarded as merely perverse. In fairness it should be remembered that the hostile States honestly suspected that Prussia was chiefly concerned for her own material interests, and wished to impose upon them an economic domination which would impede their free development. Moreover, they were unable to distinguish – and how could it have been otherwise? – between Prussia as a political and as a commercial force, and in politics Prussia represented at that time the powers of darkness and evil. Nor was this fear of Prussian encroachment altogether unjustifiable. Writing at a later date, Motz clearly disclosed the iron hand when he said: "The Prussian State has the capacity and the power to subordinate to its own supreme interests the interests of the federal States, and after the experiences of the last thirteen years we know that the love of these States can only be won through fear and respect for the existing political status." He was for simply destroying the rival Mid-German union, and making its members sue for mercy on bended knees. Nevertheless, Prussia had achieved a feat of which she was justifiably proud, and her success was increased when Electoral Hesse (Cassel) joined the northern union in 1831.

Three years later the separate groups amalgamated in a Prusso-German union, a step which made certain the inclusion of the rest of the States of the Federation, with the exception of Austria, whose presence Prussia did not want. This Customs Union (*Zollverein*) comprised eighteen States with a population of 23,000,000: only Hanover and Baden of the secondary States still stood aloof. Its motto was "Freedom of trade through unity," yet while the commercial classes looked to the economic advantages which it promised to confer upon the country, the Union was hailed by the Imperialists of that day as more than a victory for the arts of peace and for rational methods of taxation; they regarded it, as indeed it proved, as an important step on the way to political federation. The Union was first formed for eight years. Before the expiration of that period there had been added to it Hesse-Homburg, Baden, and Nassau in 1835, Frankfort in 1836, Waldeck in 1838, and Brunswick, Lippe, and Luxemburg in 1842;

Hanover and Oldenburg followed in 1851 and 1852 respectively; and now the only States remaining outside were Austria, the Mecklenburgs, and the Free Cities.

Nor was the pioneer work of Motz in connection with customs unity the only service which he rendered to Prussia and, through Prussia, to Germany. He restored his country's finances, introducing large economies without sacrificing efficiency, raised its credit, did much for the development of the postal and road systems, and gave a great stimulus to internal navigation and shipping. Thanks to him, Prussia was able, in 1824, to conclude with England a valuable navigation treaty, and freedom of traffic on the Rhine was won against the opposition of Holland by the *Rhine Navigation Act of 1831*, which made that river free to the sea. From the end of the 'thirties forward the railway system was rapidly extended in Prussia and Germany generally.

Thus it was that while the national cause still waited for the cordial support of the Princes and the Governments, material influences of many kinds were slowly but surely helping it forward. It is a fact of much significance that during the political convulsions and dislocations of 1848 and 1849, when the Germanic Federation itself was reduced to impotence, and at one time seemed ready to decree its own extinction, the Customs Union survived unshaken, a sure if solitary symbol of that movement towards union which constitutional reformers and patriotic idealists had once more failed to carry beyond the stage of fervent desire.

THE FRANKFORT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, 1848-1851

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WHILE THE KING OF Prussia had been making one new Germany in Berlin, another was being made at Frankfort. As at the beginning of the century and again in 1830, so now the cause of national unity was intimately bound up with the endeavour of the constitutional party to place the government of the country upon a broader basis. It is an altogether inadequate view that the only motive behind the democratic movements which turned Germany upside-down in 1848 was to increase the power of the people at the expense of the prerogatives of the Sovereigns and their Governments. A genuine and strong desire for closer union existed at that time, and if it was allied with demands for constitutional reform, and on the part of the extreme democrats for a radical change in the form of government itself, these demands derived much of their force and justification from the fact that it was the Sovereigns who, for their own purposes, were keeping Germany disunited.

To the ardent reformers of those days, Liberalism and national unity were merely two aspects of the same question. Without a representative parliament emanating from the free choice of free peoples, and frankly expressing the principle of popular sovereignty, unity had for them neither attraction nor meaning. Herein lay a fundamental difference of principle which hopelessly divided the Sovereigns from the great body of the nation. Many of them were still openly hostile to all constitutional innovations, and chafed sorely under the new restrictions upon their power; such rulers were in no mind to see themselves bound by the fresh restraints which might be expected from the creation of a central parliament.

From the belief, common to the popular parties, that unity could be brought about only by the resolute will of the nation itself, proceeded a movement which, though unsuccessful at the time, exerted a powerful influence upon the later course of political events and determined some of the main lines upon which the German question was ultimately to be settled. This was the movement whose outcome was the Frankfort Parliament of 1848. The first impetus came from the South, where the democratic tendencies of the early part of the century had always found promptest and most emphatic expression. In the Baden Lower Chamber the Liberal party had actively identified itself with the national cause, and in February a motion proposed by its leader, Friedrich Daniel Bassermann, calling

for the assembly of a parliament of all Germany, had evoked great enthusiasm.

For a time it seemed uncertain whether the unity movement, as now revived, would fall into constitutional or revolutionary channels. Early in March the ultra-democrats of Baden, thanks to quick and decisive action, succeeded in obtaining momentary control of the movement in that State and endeavoured to identify it with their extreme political ideas. To their ardent minds the republican cause seemed suddenly to have reached full maturity, and thrones and constitutional monarchies to have become obsolete in a single night. All that remained, therefore, was to inaugurate the new political order, fraught with so much promise, and to this end to create the necessary administrative machinery. Their expectations proved to be short-lived.

Following public meetings held in other towns of the South, a conference of South German democrats met at Heidelberg at the beginning of March in order to discuss the basis of a parliament to be representative of the whole nation. The extremists, chief among them Friedrich K. F. Hecker and Gustav von Struve, called for the immediate establishment of a full-fledged German republic. Moderate men were in a majority, however, and led by Heinrich von Gagern, a Darmstadt Minister, a warm friend of national unity, and a sturdy constitutionalist, they made the counter-proposal of a German Empire with a hereditary head. Between aims so antagonistic compromise was impossible. In the hope of forestalling their opponents, however, the constitutionalists appointed a committee of seven and authorized it to issue a general invitation to members of German legislative bodies and estates to a congress or “preliminary parliament” for the discussion of the whole question of federal reform. In 1815 the Sovereigns had reorganized Germany without consulting the people: now the people were to reorganize Germany without consulting the Sovereigns. In the meantime the Federal Diet had been comporting itself in the political storm like a water-logged vessel, rolling helplessly at the mercy of wind and wave. On March 1st it had issued a proclamation containing soothing phrases about the desirability of national unity and its desire to mother the nation with tenderer care than heretofore, but perceiving that its opinions were held as of no account, it soon relapsed into inaction.

Cordially welcomed by Senate and citizens, delegates to the number of 576, drawn from all parts of Germany, but chiefly from the South, attended the national congress at Frankfort on the last day of March, and held sessions for four days. It was regarded as a propitious sign that Prussia contributed one quarter of the total number of delegates, but as regrettable that only two came from Austria. The day before the congress met, the Federal Diet, judging where events were tending, had declared its willingness to convene a national assembly in its own name, reasoning that by so doing the Princes would be able to claim credit if good came of the plan.

Again, as at Heidelberg, the republican party made a determined attempt to capture the congress, but finding itself hopelessly outnumbered, it broke from the constitutional majority and expended its energy in fomenting revolution in Baden and elsewhere. The more impetuous reformers were in favour of proceeding at once with the drawing up of a constitution and the organization of a federal empire, without waiting for further instructions from the nation. Calmer counsels prevailed, however, and the congress confined its attention to arrangements for convening an elective, representative parliament possessed of an authoritative mandate. Having agreed that this body should be elected by universal and equal suffrage on the basis of one deputy to every 70,000 (later altered to 50,000) inhabitants, sketched a short charter of “fundamental rights of the nation,” and appointed a committee of fifty (six places being reserved for Austria) to make the necessary arrangements for the election of a National Assembly, and in connection therewith – a crowning act of arrogance – to confer with, and if needful advise, the Federal Diet, the congress on April 4th closed its meetings and dispersed with cordial “Au revoirs!” amid the same jubilation which had greeted its arrival in the imperial city.

Invited now to summon a national parliament, the Federal Diet accepted the task in the hope of re-establishing itself in public confidence, yet also fearful of the consequences of refusal; it even adopted a resolution empowering this parliament to adopt a constitution for all Germany. The various Governments were left to devise their own electoral arrangements, with the result that the Assembly was chosen on different franchises. Some Governments entered into the movement with energy, and in Prussia particularly earnest endeavours were made to secure the return of men of

moderate views, pliant, and sure to give prominence to Prussian interests. Before the Prussian deputies, many of whom were noblemen and Government officials, journeyed to Frankfort they were bidden to remember that they went there as Prussian subjects, and to act accordingly. Only in Austria was the project of a national parliament received with apathy and unconcern. There, too, the Government was now eager that the country should be well represented, but the nation as a whole was half-hearted, and Bohemia and the Slavonic territories in general flatly ignored the *congé d'élire*. The result was that Austria's direct voice in the assembly was far inferior to that of Prussia.

The German National Assembly so elected met at Frankfort, in the historical St. Paul's Church, on May 18th, four days before the Prussian National Diet held its first session in Berlin. Thus it was that while at that time the eyes of Berlin were turned to Frankfort, the eyes of Frankfort were turned to Berlin; Frederick William IV, curious to know what the empire-makers on the Main would do, the Frankfort reformers wondering whether that monarch would try to take out of their hands the task of creating a new Germany.

The National Assembly was a representative and weighty gathering, for its 550 members included most of the political and many of the best-known intellectual leaders of Germany. Because representative, it was thoroughly mixed in composition; there were among its members Ministers of State and other high officials, bishops and clergy, poets and journalists, professors and lawyers, landowners and merchants; monarchist rubbed shoulders with republican, constitutionalist with absolutist, Protestant with Ultramontane, Great German with Little German and Particularist. Among the best-known members were: of statesmen, the Austrian Anton von Schmerling (President of the Federal Diet), General von Radowitz (the confidant of Frederick William IV), H. W. von Gagern, and Georg von Vincke; the historians Dahlmann, J. G. Droysen, and Georg Waitz; the Munich theologian Ignaz Döllinger, Arndt, now a worn-out old man, the poet Uhland, Jakob Grimm, Robert Blum, the Leipzig democratic leader, and not least famous "Father" Jahn, the patron of the gymnasium. Yet while thus every colour and shade of party feeling was represented, democracy was for a time supreme, jubilant in the celebration of its heyday. A contemporary writer records that the most reactionary of politicians thought it discreet to go about Frankfort wearing the

republican emblem, the national cockade.

The National Assembly of Frankfort has often been called, in quite misplaced satire, a "professors' parliament." If the description itself is not altogether inexact, the unfavourable deductions commonly drawn from it are almost wholly so. The popular idea of the German professor, the object of so much banal caricature even in his own country, is that of a harmless theorist of the study, whose interests and speculations have no relation to actuality and the practical affairs of the world. Like most generalizations applied to classes and groups of men, this wholesale disparagement of German academic teachers is undeserved, and to no section of them is it less applicable than to the occupants of the chairs of history. Omit from the history of German constitutional reform and German unity the names of the much-maligned professors, and it will be found that most of the really eminent protagonists of these causes are ignored.

The unity movement, indeed, received a powerful impetus in the middle of the century from the brilliant band of historians which had risen up under the influence of the fathers of modern German historiography, Ranke and Dahlmann. Ranke, the cosmopolitan historian, like Goethe, the cosmopolitan man of letters, had not warmed to the idea of national unity, though, like the philosopher of Weimar, he had lived through the liberation struggle and had been an eyewitness of the great national awakening to which the struggle gave rise. All the more remarkable, therefore, was the fervour with which the most brilliant of his pupils threw themselves into the movement. Conspicuous among them were Waitz, Giesebrecht, and Sybel. By their writings and lectures as university teachers these and other men powerfully influenced the political thought of their generation, and helped to prepare the way for the practical work of the statesmen to whom was to fall, at a later date, the task of giving form and substance to the unitarian aspirations which more and more had become the common meeting- point of the German races. They differed greatly in constitutional theories, and in their views of ways and means, yet one assumption at least they had in common, that unity could be realized only under Prussian leadership, and that the day of Austria's supremacy in Germany was over. It was a small band of professors of history who in 1847 established the *Deutsche Zeitunq* in the service of the twin causes of constitutional reform and national

unity.

These men, together with the later leaders of the Prussian school of historians, like Droysen, Häusser, Duncker, Freytag, and above all Treitschke, rendered to the national movement a service of incalculable value. And if it should be objected that, by reason of their preoccupation with politics, much of their scientific work has suffered in temper and method of presentation, it may be said with truth, in partial exculpation, that many of the German historians of the middle period of last century became politicians against their will. To have kept out of the political current would have seemed to them treachery to the aspirations of their nation and to the spirit of the time.

Gagern was chosen President of the National Assembly, and he voiced the dominant sentiments in the words, "We are here to create a constitution for Germany, for the entire Empire, and our mandate and authority for this work lie in the sovereignty of the nation. Germany wishes to be one, ruled by the will of the people, with the co-operation of all its members. To make this co-operation possible for the Governments also is part of the task of this assembly."

Disregarding divisions upon questions secondary to the main issue, the delegates fell into two broad groups. The larger of these was made up of men of strong popular leanings, warmly attached to progressive constitutionalism, yet for the most part ardent monarchists. Its watchword was "Unity through liberty," for it saw no hope of permanence for an empire which was not broad-based upon the people's will. Convinced also that Germany was no longer large enough for Austria and Prussia, it sought union on the basis of Austria's exclusion and Prussian hegemony. Its great fear now was lest the national movement should be allowed to drift further; its great hope was to carry it to success on the new wave of enthusiasm. Unfortunately, this group was severely handicapped by the action of the republicans, who hung on its skirts, and at times seriously impeded its action. The other important group was that of the advocates of a Great Germany, i.e. a federated empire in which Austria should still have a place. In this group fell most of the Conservatives, Ultramontanes, and South Germans.

Gagern occupied a middle position; the federal union which he sought was one from which Austria was to be excluded yet not entirely cut off, for he hoped that she would attach herself to it in

virtue of a supplementary treaty of alliance. From the first, therefore, it was his endeavour, by making use of moderate influences on all sides, to concentrate the thought and effort of the assembly on this practical aim. His great difficulty lay less in the violence than in the variety and above all the unpractical character of the sentiments which he had to rebut or to conciliate. Many of his own friends were more concerned to devise a perfect constitution than to ensure the national unity without which such a constitution would be useless, to define ideal rights than to place on a sound working basis the legislature which would have to make these rights a reality.

A committee of seventeen experts, appointed by the Governments on the invitation of the Federal Diet, and consisting for the most part of men of Liberal ideas, had in the meantime been busily engaged upon the revision of the constitution. Its spokesman was Dahlmann, and the draft scheme produced was substantially his work. In its original form it proposed a hereditary Emperor, Ministers accountable to Parliament, an upper house composed of reigning Princes and Imperial Councillors chosen by the federal Governments and legislatures, and a lower house elected by universal and equal suffrage. The federation was to include the whole of Prussia, but of the Austrian Empire only the Cisleithan territories – in other words, Hungary was to be left out. It was taken for granted that Austria would refuse to enter the federation on these terms, and that the imperial crown would in consequence fall to Prussia. The reception given to this scheme was nowhere flattering. The Diet rejected it as impracticable and unsuited to the existing situation. The Princes were particularly indignant that they should be expected to sit in the same chamber with commoners, and these their own subjects, and so numerous withal that they might at any time be outvoted. In the country opinion was not more favourable. For the Liberals the scheme was too Conservative, for the Conservatives it was too Liberal. Moreover, to the democrats everywhere the idea of Prussia, the home of reaction, giving to the federation a hereditary Emperor was intolerable. Out of Prussia this feeling was not even confined to the democrats. In Würtemberg, as has been said, Prussia was regarded as not belonging to “pure” Germany, but rather as an alien element, and its martial King openly declared that while he thought it no indignity to recognize a Habsburger as Emperor, he would “never subordinate

himself to a Hohenzollern." So unpopular was the northern kingdom at the time, that Prince John of Saxony could say, "If the nine Electors of the old German Empire were restored, the Prince of Reuss-Greiz would have a better chance of being Emperor than the King of Prussia."

There was little need for anxiety on Prussia's account, however, for Frederick William IV not only did not want the imperial crown for himself, but he had already promised Metternich that he would do everything in his power to secure it for Austria. Whatever the National Assembly might propose, his mind was perfectly clear upon three things: Austria was not to be put out of Germany; any union that might be formed must have the assent of all the Sovereigns; and there should be no parley with the pernicious catch-cry of the democratic party, the sovereignty of the people. At heart he still clung to the hope of returning to the past and seeing the ancient Empire restored in all its glory, with the Emperor of Austria as its head, and himself, a man fitter for a convocation of saints than bivouac or battlefield, as the Commander-in-Chief of its army. His "one most fervent wish," wrote Count Bülow, the Prussian Minister-President, to Count Bernstorff, then Prussia's ambassador in Vienna, "is to set the Roman imperial crown upon the head of the Emperor of Austria."

In a letter to Prince Albert of Coburg, the King drew a fantastic sketch of the new German Empire as he pictured it. At its head, assisted by a council of Princes and a representative assembly, was to be the Habsburger, bearing again the title of Roman Emperor; but his position was to be honorary, for below him was to be a "German King," acting as the supreme executive head of the nation and at the same time as the Imperial Generalissimo. This King, who was thus to be inferior to the Emperor in office but superior to him in power, was to be elected at Frankfort, duly presented publicly to the people in the old Roman way, and consecrated with pomp by the Archbishop of Cologne if a Roman Catholic, or by a Protestant archbishop, to be created for the purpose, if a Protestant. The King communicated this alternative scheme to Dahlmann, who vainly tried to convince him of its futility.

As Dahlmann's draft constitution was unacceptable, the National Assembly appointed a committee of its own, Dahlmann being one of the thirty members, to draw up another. Meanwhile, the most urgent

task was the creation of a Central Power or Executive, and a separate committee of fifteen was directed to confer upon this difficult question. Opinion wavered between a single person and a directory of three, one each for Austria, Prussia, and the minor States collectively. Gagern had originally been in favour of a triumvirate, but later he judged that the disturbed condition of so many of the German States at the time called for a strong personal executive. This view the Assembly accepted, and it was decided to appoint a provisional executive authority in the form of a Vicar of the Empire or Imperial Administrator (*Reichsverweser*). This officer was to exercise the powers necessary to the safety and welfare of the federation, to have supreme command of the army, and to represent Germany in foreign affairs, including commercial relationships, but in all decisions relating to war and peace, and to treaties with foreign Powers, was to act in conjunction with the National Assembly. The Imperial Administrator was to nominate Ministers, responsible to the Assembly, and no order of his was to be valid unless countersigned by one of them.

On June 29th the Assembly, by an overwhelming majority (436 against 84) elected to the executive office Archduke John of Austria, brother of the Emperor Francis, a man marked out by his statesmanlike qualities and popular sympathies. Then the incredible happened, for the Federal Diet promptly sent to the Imperial Administrator a message of greeting as "the chosen of the Governments." Arriving on July 11th at Frankfort, whose population received him with public honours, the Archduke, who in the meantime had privately assured the Governments of Prussia, Bavaria, and Saxony that he intended to work harmoniously with them, was formally installed in office. First he received his authority from the assembly of the people, and then he waited on the Diet of the Princes (July 12th), whose President solemnly transferred to him, as "the legitimate head of the provisional central authority," the rights and duties of that august body, ending the ceremony with the words, "With these declarations the Federal Diet regards its work as ended." Having thus apparently divested itself of authority, it might have seemed that all that remained for the Diet to do was to die, as it had failed to live, with dignity. Instead, it still clung for a time to a titular existence, awaiting developments.

The Archduke lost no time in surrounding himself with the due

paraphernalia of state. He appointed a Ministry, with Prince Charles of Leiningen, step-brother of Queen Victoria, as President and Foreign Minister, Under-Secretaries of State, Councillors, and a small army of civil servants, for most of whom there was little or nothing to do except to receive their salaries; he ordered the levy of federal troops and nominated generals to command them; he sent envoys to a number of foreign Courts and in turn accredited their representatives – for the most part the old envoys to the Diet – to his own Court in Frankfort. Outwardly the vicegerency seemed, from the first moment of its creation, a stately and imposing institution; in effect it was little more than a make-believe. Difficulties arose at once over the exercise of executive authority. The Governments had readily given an intellectual assent to the creation of this office; but on reflection they were not equally ready to forgo their powers in consequence. Invited to make the vicegerency a reality, they now began to neutralize their former action by the simple expedient of ignoring it. Hence when the Governments were called upon to arrange parades in the garrisons on a given date, in honour of the Archduke as the supreme head of the army, they all with one consent made excuses. The least substantial of the Imperial Administrator's powers, though they were powers upon which all the rest ultimately depended, proved to be those relating to the army. "How many troops have you at your command?" he was asked one day. "I have only the Frankfort militia, and I cannot count with certainty on that," was his answer; and he spoke the literal truth.

While thus engaged in creating a new order of society at home, the philanthropists of Frankfort lent a sympathetic ear to the sorrows of countries not favoured, like their own, with the promise of immediate political unity. With all their emphasis of Germanism the citizen of the world came to the surface as they discussed the condition of Poland, of Italy, and of Schleswig-Holstein; and for each national problem they found a satisfactory remedy.

So far the National Assembly seemed to have reason for elation as it saw its plans succeeding beyond expectation. It had made sure of the desired federation, or so thought, and had given to it a provisional head, with a whole hierarchy of Ministers and bureaucrats. Much still remained to be done, however, and chiefly there had to be drawn up and enacted that charter of the people's fundamental rights – the inevitable *droits de l'homme* – which was intended to form so

important a part of the constitution.

To this fascinating occupation it now devoted its attention. The task soon proved to be far more complicated than the reformers had imagined, for all sorts of rights and liberties were suddenly discovered to be inherent in the citizenship of the new Empire, and when once the catalogue had been opened it was found difficult to close it. Further, when rights had been proposed there were objections to be answered and amendments to be considered, and this required much time. The Conservatives would have been satisfied with a very short and select list, or even with none at all, but the Liberals and Democrats were for thoroughness. Before long the declaration of the rights of the German nation was found to have run to over a hundred articles, yet no one could say how many more were still to come; for having tasted of the fruits of the tree of liberty, the friends of the new charter were eager to remain at the feast. “What a joy,” an enthusiastic deputy exclaimed at that time, “to be able at last to draw up the law for which for thirty long years we have so ardently and yet so vainly longed!” It was one thing to draw up a law, however, and another to make it a reality. The makers of the Frankfort constitution fondly dreamed that rights were created by writing them down on paper. Later, the “fundamental rights” of the German nation were, indeed, proclaimed as federal law by the Archduke, and were embodied in the new constitution, yet most of these rights have not even to-day, after nearly seventy years, materialized.

Yet all the time the Assembly forgot that precious time was rapidly passing unimproved. Prince Chlodwig Hohenlohe wrote with prophetic insight on August 31st: “It seems rather a bad look-out for national unity. The time when the iron was hot and unity could have been hammered out was wasted in idiotic, futile prattle, and the separate nationalities, Prussia in particular, are now so reinforced that we are further from unification than ever.” The disposition of the Assembly to dissipate its strength upon unessential things contributed to its undoing, for while the deputies talked the national enthusiasm was fast evaporating. Within the Assembly itself the same fatal symptom set in. As the strength of the revolutionary movement had decreased, one of the strongest motives for cohesion became weakened. Doubts arose as to whether the power and authority of the Assembly had any reality apart from the deputies’ faith in themselves.

And that faith was waning. So the harvest passed and the summer ended, yet the national cause still hung in the balance.

Two events in particular now accelerated the demoralization which had already set in. The attempt of the National Assembly, early in September, to upset the Truce of Malmö, which had been concluded between Prussia and Denmark, then engaged in the first war over the Elbe duchies, led to the resignation of the head of the Ministry, and Schmerling succeeding him, the accompanying redistribution of portfolios gave to the reaction a notable victory. A little later the popular cause was discredited by a brutal crime for which it was neither directly nor indirectly responsible. It was the misfortune rather than the fault of the Assembly that its proceedings had attracted to Frankfort from all parts a crowd of political adventurers and incendiaries, whose agitations and intrigues kept the city in turmoil. There were also occasional popular outbreaks, and these the Assembly showed no capacity to prevent or curb, greatly to the disgust of all friends of order. The climax was the murder, on September 18th, in the public street, of two delegates of the Right of high position, the Prussian General von Auerswald (mistaken, it was said, for General von Radowitz) and Prince Felix Lichnowsky. The crime was one of unmitigated barbarity, senseless and purposeless, and it only served to strengthen further the hands of the reaction.

On October 19th, five months after its first meeting, the National Assembly began to debate the constitution as finally drafted. It was divided in orderly form into seven parts, dealing consecutively with the Empire, its extent and parts; the Imperial Executive, its rights and duties; the Diet; the head of the Empire; the Imperial Court of Justice; the fundamental rights of the German nation; and constitutional guarantees, with the electoral law for the Diet.

The opening articles were a direct challenge to the Great Germany party, for they declared that the new Empire was to embrace the States comprised in the Germanic Federation, besides Schleswig, with the proviso, intended to meet the case of Austria, that if a German territory were united to a non German under the same Sovereign, such a German territory should have its own constitution and be alone admitted into the federation and become subject to the imperial constitution and legislation. This meant the splitting of the Habsburg monarchy into two parts, a course to which Austria was known to be

opposed. Her delegates and their allies warmly contested the proposal, and Gagern, by way of compromise, urged an amendment of which the effect would have been to exclude Austria from the federation, yet to associate her with it as part of a wider union. This alternative, of which much was to be heard in later years, was rejected and the original proposal approved by a large majority.

Other articles provided that the federated States were to continue politically independent, but were to cede much of their sovereign power to a central Government, consisting of the Emperor of Germany, an executive, and a Diet. The Government's jurisdiction was to comprise all foreign affairs, the army and navy, trade, customs, and communications, i.e. railways, waterways, post, etc.

The Emperor was to be not only a constitutional but a parliamentary Sovereign, governing through a Ministry responsible to the legislature, and only retaining as his special prerogatives the power to declare war, the supreme command of the army, and the right to represent the Empire in foreign relations. The legislature was to consist of an upper House of States, half of whose members were to be nominated by the Princes and the rest by the State Diets, and a popular chamber elected on manhood suffrage (twenty-four being the qualifying age), to which end the country was to be divided into single- member electoral districts, each with a population of 100,000. The two houses were to have equal legislative power, except that the sanctioning of the budget was to rest altogether with the people's representatives. In effect the Princes, as such, were to have as little weight in the national Diet as the people had hitherto had in the Diet at Frankfort.

While the Assembly was engaged upon this part of its task, unforeseen difficulties arose and threatened to spoil the work which had been so painfully accomplished. The Sovereigns and their Governments suddenly awoke to the importance of the measures which were maturing in St. Paul's Church under their very eyes. Acting under pressure, they had seemed to give a general assent to these proceedings; for had not their mouthpiece, the Diet, formally accepted the Imperial Administrator and made over to him its powers and duties? Now that danger of revolution was past, they began to view the question more critically, and to reconsider their attitude. There is no reason to suppose that the later action of the Princes, in

revoking their assent to the preparation of a constitution, was merely the fulfilment of a dark design determined on from the beginning. It is questionable whether in their state of mind when that assent was given they were even able to think so clearly or so far. In accepting a proposal for the reorganization of Germany, they had yielded to panic and the compulsion of events; but having made the first surrender, it is probable that they would have been prepared to accept the consequences had that course seemed inevitable.

Directly, however, it became apparent that the National Assembly had ceased to be the faithful reflection of the national mind, that the popular movement was exhausting itself, and that enthusiasm for unity on the lines originally proposed had given place to growing apathy, they no longer held themselves bound by pledges given in totally different circumstances. If a democratic empire, called for by the fervent acclaim of a united nation, would have been a leap in the dark, much more adventurous seemed such an experiment in the now tempered state of public opinion. It was easy, therefore, for the Princes to persuade themselves that the best service that they were able to render to Germany in this critical situation was to save her from her friends, and that in renouncing their earlier attitude they were protecting the nation against unjustifiable risks. Well might the Prince Consort of England write at this time (December 17th): "I see symptoms in the German Sovereigns of an inclination to repeat all the old faults which have been within an ace of costing them their heads. *Rien oublier et rien apprendre* is the motto of many."

"The Assembly at Frankfort," wrote Bülow gleefully to Count Bernstorff on December 20th, "is beginning to feel its impotence; it is no longer a danger to us." Now, when it was certain that a reaction had already set in, the King of Prussia came forward and invited the Princes to take the federal movement again into their own hands. An empire was well enough, but the proposed constitution virtually took away from the Princes the power which they possessed in the existing Federation, and to such a usurpation he for one was not prepared to agree. Accordingly he suggested the formation of a college of the five German Kings, which, with the Imperial Administrator, should act as the Executive, and thus serve as a breakwater against the assumptions of the new Diet, governing Germany, yet without materially infringing the sovereignty of any of the federal territories.

None of the other States favoured this alternative, however, and least of all Austria, whose attitude was decisive. There a change of ruler as well as of Minister-President had taken place, for on accepting that office Prince Felix von Schwarzenberg had stipulated that the Crown, too, should make a new start, and the Emperor (since 1835 Ferdinand) had given place to his nephew Francis Joseph, the most gifted of the archdukes, then a youth of eighteen. Schwarzenberg, whose appointment took effect on November 22nd, was by calling both soldier and diplomat, and a man of strong and masterful character, as arrogant as Metternich, but ruling by sheer will-power where Metternich had ruled by craft, and he faithfully adhered to the policy of ascendancy.

One of his first acts after taking office was to demand that the whole of Austria, independent of race, should be admitted into the Bund, a sign that he did not even yet regard the existing status as hopeless. Invited now by the Prussian Government to state his position, he replied (December 13th) that Austria was not averse to the formation of a smaller union within the larger, but she must have a right to enter both as an undivided dominion. As for the Frankfort Parliament, he ridiculed it, with all its works, and said that the only constitution possible was one upon which Austria and Prussia should agree between themselves, and that the object of such a constitution must not be the creation of a federal State, but the reform of the existing union. A stronger Executive might be expedient, and he was prepared to accept in principle Frederick William IV's idea of a college of Kings, each of whom should represent a group of minor Sovereigns. A body composed, like the existing Diet, of delegates of the Princes would be indispensable, but a popular legislature was out of the question. Schwarzenberg advised that Bavaria should first be won for action on these lines, and thereafter the other Sovereigns one by one, hinting that any resistance by the minor States should be overcome by resolute measures. The reference to Bavaria had a special significance, for all the time the Bavarian Government was entreating Austria to remain in the federation as a counterpoise to Prussia.

In general this arrangement was acceptable to Frederick William IV, whose only clear conviction was that by hook or by crook every scheme based on the exclusion of Austria must be rejected. With that exception his notions on the subject of federal reform never ceased to

be hazy and incoherent. “I admit at once,” he wrote in a note of January 4, 1849, “that I do not feel myself in a position to form any definite picture of the Germany that is to be. My imagination has no lack of pictures and wishes, but they are not such as I have felt justified in recommending for consideration at the present time.”

Far otherwise was it with Austria. Schwarzenberg at least knew what he wanted, though he was indifferent about the means for attaining his ends. Whatever the National Assembly might do, or the other States want to do, he was determined that the Bund should remain as the pledge of Austrian hegemony. On December 28th he addressed a note to the National Assembly, saying that Austria reserved the right of decision upon the question of joining the proposed new Federation and would recognize no imperial constitution which had not received the approval of the Princes, and first of all of the Emperor.

While the Princes and Governments were negotiating and plotting amongst themselves, the National Assembly continued its deliberations, and early in January it reached the critical question of the presidency of the new Federation. The choice lay between a hereditary Emperor, as favoured by the majority, and an electoral college of Princes, chosen for life or for a term of years – twelve, six, and three were all proposed. A week’s dreary talk failed to produce either agreement or a decisive majority either way. Then it became known that the Prussian Government contemplated the issue to all the Governments of a circular note intended to pave the way for an understanding with the Frankfort Assembly. While it was still under consideration, Schwarzenberg, on January 19th, sent to Berlin a further statement of his opinions and demands. Briefly he proposed that the Frankfort constitution should be rejected and its authors ignored, and that the five Kings should prepare a constitution of their own, informing the Imperial Administrator of their intention. Lest resistance should be offered to this procedure, he suggested that a force of 40,000 Prussian, Bavarian, and Würtemberg troops should occupy the environs of Frankfort, as an earnest of what the National Assembly and its friends might expect if they did not quietly and expeditiously disperse. Austria was at the moment occupied in suppressing insurrections both in Italy and Hungary, but he magnanimously offered to contribute to the army of defence and

defiance a thousand men.

Although forestalled by this manifesto, the Prussian Cabinet was not deterred from issuing its own circular, though the King's assent to it was obtained only with difficulty. In this (January 23rd) it urged upon the Governments, in contrast to the Austrian attitude, the importance of a good understanding with the National Assembly, and pointed out that if Austria refused to enter a reformed federation, as seemed likely, it would still be possible to maintain the Bund while the rest of the States formed a separate and more intimate union. Finally the note declared that the King of Prussia would not accept any position that might be offered to him by the National Assembly, except with the free acquiescence of the German Governments, for he and Prussia sought no privileged position.

To this circular Schwarzenberg replied (February 4th) that Austria was not disposed to be excluded from a close union with the other German States, and that the basis of such a union must not be inconsistent with the integrity of her entire territory; she would not agree to any arrangement which implied her exclusion from Germany. He therefore favoured a loose federation on the old lines, incorporating all the German States as before, with all their territories.

By the issue of the note of January 23rd Prussia seemed to have shaken herself free from the old weak dependence upon Austria. The object of the note was to bring into line the Governments of the secondary and small States, to relieve them of any fear of Prussian domination, and to convince them that they might with perfect safety make common cause with her, and this object appeared to have been attained. Not only did the note turn the scale against Austria in the National Assembly, but when Prussia invited the Governments to appoint plenipotentiaries to confer with her upon the question of federal reform nearly all the smaller States responded, though the kingdoms kept aloof on the plea that they could not accept any change which would give Germany a monarchical head or exclude Austria. Conferences were duly held at which a draft constitution was discussed. One of the amendments introduced was specially obnoxious to Prussia – the proposal that there should be a federal parliament elected on manhood suffrage. Then Frederick William IV again changed his mind. The thought of parting company with Austria was painful to him; he had no mind to be thrown entirely on the support

of the smaller States; and he cordially disliked the idea of being indebted to a democratic body like the National Assembly. He returned, therefore, to his old idea that Francis Joseph should be the Roman Emperor and he the Imperial Generalissimo.

On March 4th Austria received a long-delayed constitution, and it was given for the whole State in recognition of the unity of the Habsburg dominion. Schwarzenberg thereupon notified the Austrian representative at Frankfort that Austria must be admitted into the Federation as a whole, and that the constitution prepared by the National Assembly must be amended accordingly. His idea of German unity was a polyethnic empire of seventy millions, little more than half of them Germans, and the rest consisting of Magyars, Poles, Czechs, Croats, Slovenes, and Italians. The executive power was to be vested in a directory, in which Austria and Prussia should preside alternately, and the popular legislature upon which the Assembly had set its heart was to five place to a House of States consisting of seventy members, nominated by the Governments and Diets of the federal States. For the purpose of the directory Germany was to be divided into groups of States, each represented by a King. Schwarzenberg's object, or one of his objects, in producing this plan was obvious – he wished to degrade Prussia by elevating the secondary States: Prussia was henceforth to be one of five kingdoms to which Imperial Austria would condescend to assign so much of her power as she chose. Sincere or disingenuous, this was his final answer to the democratic movement of 1848. The Governments of Austria and Prussia were alike in hating this movement, but Austria hated as well the idea of giving place to Prussia in Germany, and Schwarzenberg's ultimatum was intended to silence both the National Assembly and Prussia simultaneously. So far as Austria herself was concerned, it meant the restoration of the *status quo ante* with little practical change.

That Schwarzenberg was wise in thus playing fast and loose with so true and attached a friend of Austria as Frederick William IV must be doubted. Has he seriously wished to come to an agreement with that ruler, he might even now have done so on terms which would have secured to Austria much of her old supremacy in Germany. The Prince Consort of England wrote with truth (August, 1854): "Prussia would at any time rejoice in a difficulty for Austria. The King will always be ready to sacrifice even Prussian interests for Austria." One

of the faults of Frederick William IV was the rate and noble fault of an excessive faith in his friends. It was a misfortune for the dealing between the two Powers at this time that while Austria trusted Prussia too little, Prussia trusted Austria too much; more worldly wisdom on both sides might have produced an amicable relationship which would have enabled them to work together, at least for some time longer. A strong sense of resentment was created in the National Assembly that Austria should have stepped in at the last moment with the deliberate design of wrecking the work upon which it had been labouring so long and so lovingly, and the immediate effects were a violent revulsion of feeling in favour of Prussia and the Prussian King and a determination to complete the constitution and choose the head of the new Empire without further delay. On March 27th the Assembly resolved by majorities of twenty-seven and four votes respectively, that the office should be held by a reigning German Prince and should be hereditary, and on the following day a proposal to offer it to Frederick William IV of Prussia received the support of 290 delegates, while 248, representing in the main Austria, Bavaria, and the Ultramontane and democratic parties, abstained from voting. The duty of waiting upon the King was entrusted to a committee of thirty (representing all the States with the exception of Austria), together with the President of the Assembly, now Dr. Eduard Simson, for Gagern had become the head of the Imperial Ministry in December.

Archduke John, who had secretly hoped that the choice would fall on himself, wished to resign at once the thankless position of Imperial Administrator, but he was persuaded to remain in office and await the development of a situation which was more uncertain than ever. What would the King of Prussia do? The King of Bavaria had at once written to implore him not to accept the invitation. Frederick William replied that he would so deal with the situation as to convince the Princes that Prussia had never been deserving of their mistrust. He hinted, however, that it would be proper for him to take over provisionally the functions of the Imperial Administrator, whom he now perversely regarded as the agent of a revolutionary movement. The letter was a plain intimation that the offer of the imperial title had no fascination for the King, and that in any event he would never receive it as a gift from the nation. This was, in fact, the decision which he gave to the Frankfort deputation which waited on him at the Royal Castle in

Berlin on April 3rd.

"In the resolutions of the German National Assembly which you bring to me," he said, "I acknowledge the voice of the German people. This call gives me a claim the value of which I am sensible of. . . . But I should not be establishing Germany's unity if, in violation of sacred rights and my earlier explicit declarations, I adopted, without the free acquiescence of the crowned heads, the Princes, and the free cities of Germany, a decision which would have consequences so momentous for them and the German races ruled by them."

Probably the King never came to an important decision in matters of State with a clearer conscience. Many reasons spoke for acceptance, among them the facts that a decided majority of the National Assembly was favourable to a Prussian emperorship, that the new Diet of his own kingdom wanted it, and that many of his nearest friends were pressing him to agree, on the ground that the chance might never occur again. One consideration only weighed seriously on the other side, and it was this which determined him – the fact that the offer came from men who had no right to make it. John the Baptist might baptize the Messiah in Jordan, but no vote of a popular assembly could confer the grace of God upon a Prussian Sovereign. He declined to accept the offer – for he did not explicitly reject it – "because the people alone cannot dispose of the crown and because the emperorship offered would have been little more than an ornamental sovereignty, a tool of parliament." "I can give no definite answer," he wrote to Bunsen later; "we accept or refuse only what can be offered: but they have absolutely nothing to offer. It is an affair which I must settle with my peers." To the same correspondent he spoke of a democratic crown, so created, as "a crown of shame"; to the patriot Arndt, who now saw the dream of his life wrecked, he spoke of it as a symbol of slavery.

And yet Frederick William IV deserved not the opprobrium but the gratitude of Germany for the decision to which he came. The poet-politician Ludwig Uhland, to the last a member of the National Assembly, said that "no head could rule over Germany which was not well anointed with democratic oil." It was fortunate for Germany that the most unpractical of Prussia's rulers did not accept the imperial crown, either with or without that unction. For no man was less fitted to bear so great a responsibility. As the King of Prussia he had proved

himself a failure, but, as the Emperor of Germany he would have been a disaster; under his feeble rule every tendency to wards a true and permanent national cohesion might have been weakened, the inter-State rivalries have multiplied, and the unity movement have been thrown back to the starting-point. With faithful self-revelation he said at this time to Beekerath, “I am not made of the stuff of which Frederick the Great was made: he would have been your man.”

In declining to accept the offer of the National Assembly the King had promised to confer again with the Governments, in order to learn their wishes and to ascertain whether it would still be possible to agree upon the basis of a strong empire. Austria had already made up her mind on this question, for two days later, on April 5th, Schwarzenberg, who keenly resented the slight put upon Austria and her reigning house by the action of the Frankfort Assembly, recalled the Austrian delegates, determined to ignore the Assembly henceforth, and simultaneously let it be known that the Emperor would recognize no German Sovereign in the Federation above himself, nor allow any outside interference in Austrian affairs. Nevertheless, the faith of the empire-makers was not yet quenched, and on April 11th the Assembly reaffirmed its adhesion to the complete constitution. Most of the Governments, and of the Diets nearly all, had in the meantime formally accepted it. Only the kingdoms stood out, with one exception, Würtemberg, whose Sovereign accepted the vote of the Diet under protest. On April 21st, the Prussian Lower House, on the motion of Karl von Rodbertus, voted recognition by a narrow majority, but the Government ignored the vote.

The Prussian Cabinet duly circularised the Governments, as had been intended. The King, they were told, would be willing to succeed Archduke John and to take the leadership of a federation of States to be formed by mature agreement, if an invitation so to do reached him from them: they were therefore asked to declare their will, leaving the question of a constitution to be decided later when the character of the federation had been determined. On Austria’s behalf Schwarzenberg refused to consider such a proposal, and said that as the Emperor had urged the Archduke to remain in office there was no need for the King of Prussia to take his place. Not only would Austria decline to become part of a federal State, however, but she would insist on maintaining all her rights under existing treaties. Of the

secondary States, Bavaria replied unfavourably, and the remainder were lukewarm, while nearly all the small States – twenty-eight in number – were willing to accept Prussian leadership. In the absence of frank acquiescence by the kingdoms, however, Frederick William IV did not proceed further with his proposal, and at the end of April he abruptly announced that he had definitely decided to decline the invitation.

This decision marked the beginning of the end of the National Assembly. The Austrians had already returned home, and of the German delegates many of the best known had likewise left Frankfort, convinced of the uselessness of further action, while others retained only a, listless interest in the proceedings, looking on and awaiting developments; daily the ranks of the constitutional party became thinner. “The German nation is about to give itself the freest of all constitutions, and no power on earth can prevent it,” Beckerath had said when the Assembly was in the midst of the debates on the charter of national liberties. Nine months more had passed, and still the constitution had not taken shape, and its chances of doing so were daily growing weaker.

Soon the Assembly itself was to end before the completion of its task. Receiving from the nation, in virtue of a mandate than which none more popular, more direct, or more explicit was known in German history, the commission to bring to a head the long-protracted movement for unity, by means of a constitution which should express the people’s sovereign will, it had met fully convinced of its power and right to fulfil the great trust, never wavering in the faith that the days of reaction were over and that for the German nation a brighter future was about to open. The spirit of statesmanlike restraint which had in general ruled its proceedings had been overborne at times by violent recrimination and wild disorder, yet even in the moments of tense crisis, when its own fate and the fate of the cause committed to its care had seemed to hang in the balance, the saner elements had invariably conquered, the tempest had been calmed, and the voice of reason had again prevailed.

No member and no party had gained all they wished, yet all had had a hearing for even the most impossible theories and the most unworkable schemes. The result was a compromise which disappointed the hopes of the extremists on both sides. If, on the one

hand, the revolutionary longings of those who fondly dreamed that the future of Germany lay with republicanism had not been realized, so, on the other hand, the designs of the reactionaries, who lamented that the best of German life would pass into oblivion with the Bund, had been frustrated. Yet at least the cause of unity and liberty seemed to have come to fruition, for a constitution had been framed in which a place was found not only for an Emperor but for the nation and a National Legislature.

Now, with the suddenness of an apparition, the autocracy which was believed to have been destroyed gave signs of life, and the hand which had lain paralysed and helpless was again lifted to strike. The Diet was thought to have been superseded, its prerogatives destroyed, its paraphernalia committed in contumely to the rest of the lumber stored in the musty attics of the federal palace in Frankfort. Instead, it was discovered that it was the National Assembly that was to go, while the Bund, so long ridiculed and so often threatened, was once more to defeat the designs of its enemies.

The Moscow retreat of the national movement, which but a year ago had seemed so near its goal, now began. Already the National Assembly had lost its representative character, and the claim that it expressed the nation's mind had ceased to be any longer true. With the forfeit of its authority the Assembly was no longer feared by the Governments, and, worse still, it was no longer respected. "Everything is in order," was the cryptic answer given by the reactionary Minister Schmerling, when asked at this time how matters in the Assembly were faring. Everything truly was in order for the collapse of the constitutional movement as personified by the Frankfort Parliament. The voice of the people, which for a time had seemed to shake the seats of the mighty, ceased to alarm as soon as the Princes and Governments knew that behind it there was neither national power nor national will. One by one the parties had shed their more moderate members, the reactionaries leaving willingly the scene of their useless efforts, the ardent friends of unity withdrawing in dejected and chastened spirit. On May 4th, disheartened but still not dismayed, the Assembly invited the Governments to put in force the constitution, ordered elections to the Diet of the Empire to take place on July 15th, and fixed the Diet's first meeting for August 22nd; but its authority had ceased to carry weight, and the order was

disregarded. A few days later the Prussian deputies were recalled, and the end of the month saw the withdrawal of all but the less influential of these. Great as was still their faith in the cause of unity, even Dahlmann, Gagern, Arndt, and Simson recognized that for the present no more could be done for it in Frankfort. At last only a rump, representing the extreme democrats, remained, its members wrathful at the turn which events had taken, yet still indisposed to bend the neck to the revived and hated emblem of autocracy, the Bund.

Unable to continue its sittings at Frankfort, this faithful remnant removed, at the end of May, to Stuttgart, the capital of a kingdom whose people had staunchly adhered to the democratic cause alike through dark days and bright. There the Assembly professed to reconstitute itself, and then with make-believe assurance it resumed its deliberations, even creating an Imperial Regency in place of the Administrator. But its doom was sealed. On June 18, 1849, a body of Würtemberg troops entered its meeting hall and bade it disperse. Thus the last flicker of life died out of the National Assembly amid circumstances of unexampled humiliation and irony. Called into existence to proclaim the principle of popular sovereignty, this first great inquest of the nation succumbed to the soldiery of the reaction, arrogant and vindictive in the consciousness of resuscitated power.

The bitter memories of the national disappointments and disillusionments of 1848 and 1849 have been erased by the political triumphs won twenty years later. Germany has now for nearly half a century enjoyed the unity which was denied to her at Frankfort, yet the fate of the National Assembly will stand out always in national history as a supreme tragedy of foiled hopes and aspirations, of faith and confidence shattered and destroyed at the very moment of apparent fruition. It is easy to make light of the dreams in which the constitution- makers of those days indulged. There was, indeed, a singular and almost frivolous *naïveté* in the credulity of many of those men, in their wonderful gift of self-deception, in their faculty for believing and seeing what they wished to believe and see. Yet one might well ask where the world would stand to-day if the friends of hopeless causes and impossible loyalties had not refused to recognize defeat, and made every rebuff a call to fight better. Behind all the impracticable idealism, all the pedantry, doctrinarianism, and wild theories that found expression in St. Paul's Church, there was that

elevation of spirit and that force of conviction which have been the sword and panoply of all earnest combatants in the struggle for human progress in every age. The world in its superior way smiles at the extravagances of these men, yet in its best and truest moods it knows that, compared with the moon-raking and sky-scraping fancies of the impracticable enthusiast, its own exceeding wisdom is foolishness indeed. The German who, looking back to that distant time, lacks the sense of its greatness and dignity, and can recall without emotion the large-spirited heroism of the foiled and broken deputies of Frankfort, men for the most part unnamed and unknown, who in making a constitution were also trying to make a nation, confesses insensibility to one of the most moving passages in his country's history.

And, after all, the success denied in 1848 and 1849 was only deferred. The National Assembly seemed to have failed completely and ignominiously, yet it had in truth kindled in the German nation a fire which was not again to be put out. If the so-called "failures" of political life – for such are almost always the path makers of progress – were able to return to the scenes of their unrequited toil, great would be the surprise of the democrats of Frankfort to see how far the constitution of the German Empire of to-day had been modelled upon their own untimely efforts. These merely anticipated many of the most important achievements of 1866 and 1871 – the ejection of Austria from Germany, the close federation of all the remaining States, the hereditary emperorship vested in the house of Prussia, uniform imperial law and justice, manhood suffrage, a unified army, and the rest. There is truth in the verdict of a contemporary German historian, Hans Delbrück, that the "professors' Parliament of Frankfort" was more statesman like and saw more clearly the needs of Germany than the Sovereigns who destroyed its handiwork.

The failure of the National Assembly and the rejection of its constitution left the question of federal reform even more unsettled than before, and the outlook was not improved when, in May, the flames of revolution, damped down for a time, burst forth anew. In parts of the South, in Saxony, Hanover, even in Prussia, dangerous tumults occurred, and in some places the troops sent to quell disorder sided with the insurgents. The rulers of Bavaria, Saxony, and Baden, unwilling to trust Prussia in the hour of peace, were quick to appeal

for help when the security of their territories was threatened, and in the common cause of order Frederick William IV promptly responded to their call. The Prince of Prussia led the Prussian troops against the insurgents in Baden, where part of the soldiery had joined the rebels, and he both restored the Grand Duke's authority and reorganized his army. The revolutionary movements again quelled, the further development of the German question for some time took the form of a diplomatic duel between the two major Powers, Prussia endeavouring with increasing urgency to help the reform movement forward, Austria endeavouring, with equal purpose and greater success, to obstruct every attempt at progress. Prussia was prolific of schemes; if one failed to attract her fastidious rival, always another was soon ready. The secondary States likewise tried their hand at negotiation in turn, but their feeble efforts were quite subordinate to those of their powerful allies.

The boldest move made by Prussia was the formation of the Union, an agglomeration of the smaller States favourable to federation under her leadership. Grateful to Frederick William IV for the help of his soldiers in overcoming the revolution, the Kings of Saxony and Hanover joined him on May 26th in forming the "three Kings' alliance," and backed by this combination a new experimental constitution, which had been drawn up by General von Radowitz, was put forward for discussion. Just before this the Czar, fearing constitutionalism even more than German unity, had warned the King that he would regard any reconstruction of the Federation without Austrian co-operation as an infraction of the treaties of 1815. Austria, however, was still well able to look after herself, even had Prussia been disposed to ignore her; having by this time, with the assistance of Russian troops, almost quelled the Hungarian revolution, she was now able to resume the old rôle of obstructionist in Germany. The Union scheme was, however, an honest endeavour to do justice to Austrian and Prussian claims equally, for while it proposed the formation of a German federation from which Austria was to be excluded, it was all essential part of the arrangement – the idea will be remembered as Gagern's – that the Federation should enter into a perpetual alliance with Austria for mutual defence. This was the scheme of which Lord Palmerston spoke later as "a very good European arrangement."

The draft constitution drawn up on this basis adopted certain features of the abandoned Frankfort constitution, but omitted just those provisions which to the Liberals were most important. There was to be a national parliament, but the proposed equal and universal franchise was to give place to a fanciful indirect franchise based upon that recently introduced in Prussia, with its income qualification and its grouping of the voters in three classes; the parliament itself was no longer to have exclusive control over finance, but to share its power with a House of States nominated in moieties by the Governments and legislatures of the various States; no law was to be valid without the Government's consent; the Sovereigns were to be given a more authoritative position, for the hereditary Emperor was to be replaced by a College of Princes, with the King of Prussia as President, and as such exercising the executive power and also a veto on legislation; and the fundamental rights of the nation as proclaimed at Frankfort were to be curtailed and left to be adopted by the federated States at discretion.

Such as it was, the Union scheme might have succeeded had Frederick William IV, taking advantage of the momentary revival of Prussia's prestige and the Princes' consciousness of indebtedness to her, pressed it vigorously at the beginning. Instead of seizing his opportunity, however, he hesitated and vacillated, and in the end sacrificed a golden chance which never returned. Nevertheless, a congress of Imperialists met at Gotha at the end of June, at the invitation of Gagern, Dahlmann, and others, and approved both the scheme and the immediate summoning of a National Diet to decide upon its adoption. By the end of August nearly all the small States had signified their adhesion. Austria, on the other hand, held aloof, and, owing to her hostile attitude, Bavaria and Würtemberg also refused to join, a decision which in the end led to the withdrawal of Saxony and Hanover. Once again Prussia found herself dependent upon the small States, many of which were all things by turn and nothing long.

The position of the Bund in the meantime was an ambiguous one. Putatively it was still in existence, because the federal scheme which was to have superseded it had broken down; but so also was the Imperial Administrator. Archduke John, in spite of his disappointment at missing the purple, had continued to hold his office and discharge its duties, contending that he personified the old Federation until it

should have been replaced by a new one. Now he was compelled to accept, on Schwarzenberg's proposal, an arrangement (leading to his resignation in December) by which Austria and Prussia were to take over until May 1, 1850, the power which had been transferred to him by the Diet a year before, the two Governments in the meantime to decide upon a new federal constitution. From Prussia's standpoint the importance of the agreement lay in the fact that it seemed to place the rival Powers for the first time in a position of equality within the Federation, yet to leave still open the question of forming a smaller union under Prussia's leadership. Bernstorff, the Prussian Minister in Vienna, appears to have negotiated the agreement to a large extent on his own authority, but Frederick William IV, only too well pleased by the thought that Austria had abandoned her dog-in-the-manger attitude, gave ready assent, and it was embodied in a convention of September 30th.

To Schwarzenberg, however, the convention was only a pretext, intended to quiet Prussia and to gain time for himself, for he still counted on the revival of the Bund. As there was no further move on the part of Austria, Frederick William, after months of waiting, convened a parliament of all Germany to consider and adopt his Union constitution, and it met at Erfurt on March 20, 1850. Bunsen wrote the month before (February 20th): "The Princes are wavering more or less, now that the hour of danger is past. Still, they are bound by their popular parliaments, finances, and necessities, and cannot shake these off, as many of them do their words and engagements." That was a too charitable judgment. The rulers of Saxony, Würtemberg, and Mecklenburg-Schwerin had already abolished the constitutional reforms which had been wrung from them under the menace of revolution, and even the King of Prussia, so eager to give the German nation some sort of political unity, was now whittling down the concessions which he had promised to his subjects two years before.

The Erfurt parliament faithfully reflected the changed situation. It was a very different National Assembly from that of Frankfort. Most of the States of the Bund were represented, but some of the exceptions were ominous – all the four secondary kingdoms and, of course, Austria. Among the deputies were no republicans and hardly any democrats; some of the old champions of constitutionalism – among

them Gagern, Vincke, and Simson – were there, but it was for the most part composed of pliant Government men, summoned to do what was required of them and prepared to obey orders; two of the best-known members of the Prussian Court party, Otto von Bismarck and Ludwig von Gerlach, sat in the lower chamber. In no respect could such a gathering be regarded as representative of the nation. The constitution of May 26th was adopted by both houses with few modifications, whereupon the deputies were sent home (April 29th) with the intimation that Prussia would continue direct with the Governments all such further negotiations as might be necessary. No one who took part in the proceedings was more convinced than Radowitz, the author of the Union project, that he had been privy to a fraud on the nation.

A few days previously Schwarzenberg had played his trump card. If Prussia had on her side the great majority of the small States, the four kingdoms had returned to Austria. The moment, therefore, was propitious for a bold counterstroke. Accordingly, he determined to revive the Federation and the Diet, relying for support on the distrust of the States of any new adventure, their weariness of the agitations and intrigues which had so long kept the nation in a state of ferment, and the opposition of the South to Prussian leadership. On April 19th he issued to the Governments, except that of Berlin, an intimation that inasmuch as it had not been possible to agree with Prussia on the formation of a new central Government, it was desirable that the States should confer together, and Austria, therefore, as President of the Federation, took upon herself the duty of convening the Sovereigns to a congress at Frankfort. He added that those States which were not willing to attend would forfeit the right to vote, while being bound by any resolutions that might be adopted. Rejecting an offer of Prussia to join the rest of the States in conferring on the question of federal reform subject to the conditions that the Diet should not be revived and that nothing should be done to interfere with the Union, Austria duly summoned the plenipotentiaries to Frankfort for May 10th.

The dispute was now narrowed to a single definite issue, which could no longer be evaded or ignored. On the one hand, Austria was fighting for her old status and rights. She had ruled Germany for five centuries and was determined to rule in the future, but to that end the

existing federal organization must as far as possible be maintained.

Prussia, on the other hand, was making a final, though still half-hearted, bid for the leadership of Germany, and since this claim was unrealisable in the existing Federation, she hoped to realize it through a new union to be created alongside of it. In no circumstances was Prussia prepared – so Frederick William IV had persuaded himself – to submit again to the domination of the old Diet, there to be once more reduced to the level of the smallest of the States. Hence, the most effective answer to Austria's challenge was to hasten the adoption of the Union constitution, and with this end in view the King invited the Princes who had given to it their assent to meet him in Berlin on May 8th. Although there had been secessions in the meantime, a majority of the earlier adherents responded, and while twelve approved the constitution outright, the rest either gave a partial assent or asked for time for further reflection. As the constitution could not be put in operation at once, the Union was prolonged until July 15th and a committee of Princes was appointed to carry on its business temporarily.

On the same day that the conference of Princes at Berlin ended without decisive result (May 16th), the plenipotentiaries summoned to Frankfort formally reconstituted the Diet, which began its deliberations under the presidency of Count Thun. The Governments of only eleven States took part, but these included all the minor kingdoms, and so supported Schwarzenberg felt sure of victory. Nevertheless, he was prepared to use his power moderately, and to offer Prussia important concessions if only she would abandon the Union constitution and approach the question of federal reform on Austrian lines; he even offered to acknowledge the Union so long as it was confined to North Germany, and to make the reform of the Diet the subject of conferences at Vienna in which the partisans of both Powers should be allowed to take part, unpledged to any present plan. Prussia refused, the King wishing to keep faith with his Union allies, undeterred by the fact of several additional defections and the prospect of more. At this time there were ominous portents of more violent differences, and both at Vienna and Berlin the possibility of war was seriously discussed. As if such a test of his principles and resolution were not severe enough, Frederick William IV was further discouraged by the knowledge that Czar Nicholas I was altogether on

Austria's side and viewed the Union project with marked hostility. Once more he wavered, and the foothold lost in so doing was never recovered.

Prussia's cup of humiliation had for some time been filling fast, but it was not yet full. Two ignominious surrenders remained to be made before the bitter draught was complete. These were the conventions of Warsaw and Olmütz. The first arose out of a rising in Hesse-Cassel early in 1850. Ever since its admission to the Federation, electoral Hesse, owing to the obstinacy of its rulers, had been a nuisance to its allies, and particularly to Prussia, its next-door neighbour. During the domination of Napoleon the electorate was made part of the kingdom of Westphalia, and on the restoration of its independence in 1813 the Electors had vented their soreness upon their subjects. In January 1831 these succeeded in turning the tables upon the reigning Prince, from whom they wrested a fairly Liberal constitution providing for a single chamber. The constitution had been fortified by a good electoral law, and, improved by modifications made in 1848 and 1849, it had enabled Hesse to pass through the strain of the revolution peacefully. The self-willed Elector Frederick William I had always grudged his people the concessions made in 1831, though the relations between his Government and the Diet continued to be harmonious until 1850, by which time the rest of Germany had settled down from the late unrest, the peoples to count up their gains, the Princes to count up their losses. In February of that year the Elector made an unfortunate choice of Ministers in placing in power one Hassenpflug, a capable but morally and politically unprincipled man. After having been dismissed from the Elector's service in 1830, Hassenpflug had successively served the Prince of Hohenzollern, the King of Holland, and the King of Prussia, until he again appeared in Hesse, again to be ejected – this time by an indignant populace.

No sooner had Hassenpflug formed his Ministry than he decided to emasculate the Chamber for the wanton purpose of restoring the absolutist system which had been abolished nearly twenty years before. After overriding one provision of the constitution after another, he finally announced that the Elector intended to dissolve the Chamber altogether, and demanded a six months' vote of taxes before that was done. As no budget had been presented, the Chamber refused to depart from the usual constitutional forms, and in June it was

dissolved with insult. From the election which followed, the despotic Minister hoped to obtain a more tractable house, but in this he was disappointed. While in the dissolved Chamber the Government had at least one supporter, in the new Chamber it was faced by unanimous opposition. Unable to obtain money by constitutional means, the Elector ordered the collection of taxes to proceed as usual, but the bureaucracy from top to bottom refused to obey him. A state of siege was illegally proclaimed throughout the country in September. Hesse at an early stage had joined the Union, though Hassenpflug had lost no time in making known his preference for the Bund as it was, or might be after Austrian revision. Now in his extremity the Elector appealed to the Federal Diet for armed assistance, though he had before challenged its right to interfere in the internal affairs of his country.

There was as yet no violence in the electorate: the attitude of the population was simply one of passive resistance to outrageous acts of illegality; even the army sided with the civil population, and nearly the whole of the officers resigned their commissions. In the end the Elector and his Ministers deemed it discreet to leave the country.

Suspecting in the attitude of the people of Hesse a revival of revolutionary tendencies, the Federal Diet, in the name of order, promptly promised the Elector the assistance asked for, and duly ordered federal execution, whereupon a body of Austrian and Bavarian troops entered the electorate with a view to compelling submission. Judge Jeffreys courts were set up under the presidency of Count Rechberg, later the Austrian Foreign Minister, for the trial of recalcitrant State officials, and drastic punishment was awarded wholesale. The Diet went to the length of annulling the constitution of 1831 as contrary to federal law, and empowering the Elector to publish one of Hassenpflug's making, providing for two Chambers instead of one, the lower house eligible upon a narrow franchise.

In face of this provocative action Prussia could not remain inactive. Hesse was still nominally one of the States of the Union, which had guaranteed its constitution, but that fact alone did not, perhaps, justify intervention. Nor need it be concluded that the Prussian Government was greatly concerned about the relative merits of the rival constitutions. It was convinced, however, that constitutional disputes, in Hesse as at home, were mischievous, and

that continued turmoil in the adjacent electorate would be dangerous for Prussia, now again happily tranquil. Fearing thus the effects of disorder upon his own kingdom, Frederick William IV had already called upon the Elector to return to the constitutional status of 1831 and settle down to peaceful government, and in self-protection he had covered the two military roads over which he had a right of passage across the electorate. Now he found that intervention had brought him to the brink of a war in which Prussia might have to face Austria and the two southern kingdoms single-handed.

When, several months before, in a conversation with Schwarzenberg in Vienna, Count Bernstorff, the Prussian envoy there, met the demand that Prussia should dissolve the Union with the answer that it could not be done with honour, Schwarzenberg had said: “Then you had better prepare for war!” Thereupon the envoy had quietly answered: “We *are* prepared.” It was not correct, however, whether Bernstorff knew it or not. The Prussian army still rested on the old *Landwehr* basis, but it had been neglected, the term of service had been reduced to two years, and economy had been carried to such extremes that there was not even a sufficiency of officers. Finally, war was costly, and the King had neither money nor, in the existing strained relationships with his Diet, the prospect of obtaining any for an adventure of the kind.

When, therefore, at Austria’s request, the Czar convened a conference at Warsaw (October 15, 1850) to discuss German questions, Frederick William could not refuse to take part. The questions raised included, in addition to the dispute about Hesse, the German and Prussian relations to the Danish fiefs of Schleswig and Holstein (a question here passed over, since it will receive special treatment later), and federal reform. Count Brandenburg, now for a year the head of the Ministry, attended as the Prussian plenipotentiary. Russia and Austria demanded jointly that Prussia should accept the action of the Diet, evacuate Hesse at once, and leave the question of German unity alone for the present, since it created only trouble and ill- will. Unable to make such a surrender, Brandenburg returned home for instructions, while Austrian and Bavarian troops marched further into Hesse and a bloodless collision with the Prussians followed. Frederick William had no more heart for fighting Austria than Dogberry for arresting rogues, and though, like

the Prince of Prussia, his brother, he professed to favour mobilization, he refused to vote for it, and left the responsibility to his Ministers. As a majority, persuaded by Brandenburg, opposed that extreme measure, the King with relief called a retreat and left Austria in virtual control of the electorate. No other result could have been expected, for the King, in taking leave of the troops which crossed the frontier, had addressed to the general in command the earnest admonition, "I hold you responsible with your head that no blood is shed!"

A few days later Brandenburg died suddenly. Sybel accepts, but other historians reject, the story that his end was due to mortification at the humiliating episode in which he had been compelled to take so thankless a part and at the reproaches of the war party. He was succeeded as Minister-President and Foreign Minister by Baron von Manteuffel, hitherto Minister of the Interior, who brought into the Cabinet, which he directed for eight years, a strong anti-Liberal bias. This surrender to Austria probably saved Germany from a premature civil war, but it cost Prussia heavily in reputation and prestige, and encouraged Schwarzenberg in the determination to carry humiliation still further.

The Warsaw convention was called a compromise, but it was one of those compromises in which the surrender is all on one side, for it amounted to a declaration on Prussia's part of her willingness to go back under the old yoke of the Bund, its Diet, and Austria. On November 15th the Prussian Government announced to its allies the formal suspension of the Union constitution, adding that it would be prepared to take up the question of the Union again as soon as a reformed constitution for all Germany had been agreed upon. To Prussia's faithful allies this capitulation seemed like calculated betrayal, and their disappointment was profound. The humiliation of Warsaw was consummated at the end of the month at Olmütz. There Prussia accepted the further terms of surrender just as her rival, behind whom was Russia, dictated them; there was no resistance and hardly a protest; Austria drew up the compact, and all that Prussia was allowed to do was to sign her name in acquiescence. The effect of the so-called Punctation of Olmütz, concluded on November 29th, was that the Germanic Federation was revived as if nothing had happened, and the menace to its future swept aside by mutual consent. Thus at one stroke the whole of the work of the past three years in the cause

of German unity seemed to have been undone. It was as though the National Assembly and the Erfurt Parliament had never met and all the laborious negotiations between Prussia and the other Governments had never taken place. Without bearing any of the toil and stress of those years, Austria, by simply holding her hand until the favourable moment for intervention arrived, had effectually checkmated her rival's plans and brought the question of unity to a standstill.

Schwarzenberg had often said, "Our strength lies in waiting," and for once it seemed as though Austria had not waited too long. It was, indeed, part of the bargain that the question of federal reform should be reopened without delay, but it was to be reopened by Austria in her own way. Prussia for all her pains had achieved nothing save chagrin and humiliation, while she had lost much – influence, prestige, and, above all, the respect of the States whose support she had first won and then cast aside. All the King's concessions had ended in failure, and now, as a crowning ignominy, he had been made the laughing-stock of Europe. If Schwarzenberg's policy was correctly expressed in the words, "*D'abord avilir, puis démolir la Prusse*," one-half of it had already been made good.

Not the least ignominious part of the one-sided bargain was the King's recall of Bernstorff, his ambassador at Vienna, whose courageous attitude had made him inconvenient to Schwarzenberg. Count Usedom, the Prussian ambassador in Florence, told Prince Hohenlohe many years later (December, 1866), by way of illustrating "how men could change their opinions," that "it was Bismarck who drove Manteuffel to Olmütz," and his explanation of the surrender was that "at that time Bismarck looked upon the Austrian alliance as the sole means of salvation." There was a more convincing reason for Bismarck's attitude, however, and it was the knowledge that Prussia was not in a position to go to war. Many years later he told the Imperial Diet that the Minister of War assured him at the time that Prussia's army was so inferior that it could not have prevented the Austrians from occupying Berlin. It was under the influence of the events at Olmütz – galling to all friends of German unity – that Prince Albert wrote to his brother, Duke Ernest of Saxe-Coburg (January 18, 1851): "Emperor Nicholas is at present complete master of Europe. Austria is only an instrument, Prussia a dupe, France a nonentity, whilst England, whose affairs are conducted by a statesman (Lord

Palmerston) devoid of public morality, is less than nothing."

Prussia's relations with the secondary States also were now worse than before. These States saw Austria, which was to have been put out of Germany, confirmed in the old position of primacy and Prussia again restored to the rôle of makeweight. They had not played a fair game, but the result was quite to their liking. In truth there had been little straightforwardness about any of the Princes and Governments on one side or the other. Schwarzenberg's actions had been marked by so much duplicity that Bernstorff, to whom fell most of the personal negotiations with him, never knew when to believe him. Frederick William IV himself, though straightforward in his dealings with Austria, even in spite of his weakness and vacillation, had played fast and loose with the National Assembly and the popular cause, just as the tactics of the moment seemed to require. If he had alienated the strong Liberal sentiment in the country and yet had failed to win for his plans the Governments whose support was essential, his own instability and want of conviction were chiefly to blame. At that time even upright men, which few of the leading actors in the political drama were, deemed crooked means to be justified by the impossibility of attaining their ends by straight ones. The purist Count Bernstorff had indulged in a little intrigue on his own account. While the King still held sturdily to the Union, Bernstorff promised Schwarzenberg, in a private letter (June 19, 1850), that if he would abstain from any further action with regard to the old Diet at Frankfort "he for his part would do everything in his power to prevent any further progress of the Union in Berlin."

The curtain was about to fall upon this tragi-comedy of political intrigue, and it was easy to see what the dénouement would be. In return for Prussia's surrender Austria had agreed to the immediate holding of conferences of Ministers to consider what (if anything) should be done to reform the existing Bund, but without giving any definite pledge of action, and these conferences began in Dresden on December 23rd. Schwarzenberg was the president, and he had a capable colleague in Count von Buol-Schauenstein, while the Prussian plenipotentiaries were Manteuffel, the head of the Ministry, and Count von Alvensleben-Erxleben. Austria proposed that the functions of the Diet should be divided, the full body to deal with legislation, and a college or directory to act as the executive. This college was to consist

of seven plenipotentiaries with nine votes – two each for Austria and Prussia, one each for the other four kingdoms, and one for Baden, Holstein, Luxemburg, and the two Hesses together: the rest of the States were to have no representation, even in mediatized form in groups. Against this proposal the small States warmly protested, and Prussia taking their side, not only because most of them were her allies of the Union, but because such an arrangement would have assured to Austria a permanent majority, two members were added to represent these States. Some of the Governments still pressed for a parliament nominated by the Diets of the States, but the two major Powers combined to defeat the idea. On the other hand, Austria refused to accept Prussia's claim to an equal voice in the presidency. Finding at length that his scheme met with more criticism than support, Schwarzenberg abandoned it.

Then Frederick William IV surpassed his past record for incalculable diplomacy and weak manœuvring by inviting Austria to enter into an alliance, carrying a reciprocal guarantee of the territorial integrity of both of the allies. The proposal came to nothing, but it paved the way for Prussia's capitulation on the reform question. In April 1851 the King agreed, at Austria's invitation, to enter the Federation again, virtually without conditions, and to call on his Union allies to do the same.

Thus after years of incessant wrangling the rivals for hegemony in Germany appeared to be left where they were before. Yet such was not quite the case. It was true that for the present the Federation was to remain and Austria in it, but the Union movement, though apparently frustrated, held the secret of Germany's future reorganization: it was a sign that the days of a Great Germany were numbered.

Having settled the political question between them, at least provisionally, Austria at this time endeavoured to challenge the economic predominance which Prussia had gradually been asserting in Germany by the help of the Customs Union. By the prospective admission to the Union of Hanover and Oldenburg respectively – to take effect only after the renewal of the Union, which was nearly due – in virtue of treaties concluded in 1851 and 1854, only the Mecklenburgs and the Free Cities, besides Austria herself, remained outside. Austria had watched this movement with growing suspicion,

recognizing that the economic unity of Germany under Prussian leadership could hardly fail to help forward political unity under the same leadership. As in so many other things, however, the statesmanship of Vienna had allowed the evil to go too far before proposing a remedy. The Customs Union had become firmly rooted in the commercial life of the nation, and the belated efforts which it now made to wrest from Prussia an advantage which was due to its own supineness and neglect never had the slightest chance of success. The existing Customs Union treaties would expire at the end of 1853 and negotiations for their renewal were to open in Berlin in April 1852. Hoping to give to them an entirely different turn, Austria invited all the States, with the exception of Prussia, to confer with her in advance, and a conference was accordingly held in Vienna in January. Much sympathy was shown to the Austrian desire to be admitted to full partnership in the Union, but the necessity which would have arisen for revising its basis in a more protectionist sense was at once seen to be an insuperable difficulty. Nevertheless, the idea of a separate union, consisting of Austria, three of the secondary and several of the minor States, was seriously considered as an alternative to Austria's inclusion in the existing *Zollverein*, though no formal agreement resulted. In the event the Customs Union was renewed on the old basis for twelve years (April 4, 1853), but was supplemented by a separate customs and commercial treaty with Austria, providing for a reciprocal reduction of certain duties, arranged just before (February 19) by Prussia and subsequently accepted by all her allies. This treaty, which was concluded for twelve years, contained a rash speculation upon the future in the form of a provision that within that period negotiations should be opened with a view to the admission of Austria into the general Union.

The revolutionary movement exhausted and the question of federal reform cleared out of the way, the Princes were now able to set up house again in Frankfort, hoping that the new lease of life granted to the Federation and its Diet would not be disturbed for a long time. So the old routine was restored, the old mummery resumed, and the Diet went its way as before. One of the first acts of the two reconciled allies was to make war against the democratic ideas which had been at the root of the trouble. Had there been no Liberal awakening, there would have been no German question to solve. To

the short-sighted statesmen of the time it seemed, therefore, that the secret of tranquillity was now to sit on the safety-valve. To undo "the shame of the revolution" became for the King of Prussia an absorbing purpose, to be prosecuted with fanatical ardour as far and as long as seemed safe. He had given to Prussia a constitution, yet had he dared he would now have abolished it by a *coup d'état*. "The King," Bunsen wrote, "had resolved to direct all politics by himself alone; he would have a dictatorship by the side of the constitution, and yet be considered a liberal constitutional Sovereign, whereas he considered the liberal constitutional system to be one of deceit and falsehood." Saner minds and stronger wills than his own stayed his hand, but though Bunsen appealed to him on the sanctity of the royal oath, it was no scruples on that score that deterred him. What he did was to thwart the even course of constitutional life, by refusing to pass laws, as required by the constitution, giving effect to rights there laid down, by exercising his veto whenever possible to the prejudice of Liberal measures, and by giving to laws and ordinances actually issued a narrow and perverted interpretation. Finally, at death he left behind him a document in which he charged his successors one by one to disown the constitution which he himself had not ventured to repeal.

The Austrian Government carried out the counter-revolution by measures which, if more violent, were at least more straightforward. On the last day of 1851 the constitution granted in March 1849 was arbitrarily repealed, the legislature dissolved, absolutism revived, and the spirit and system of Metternich re-enthroned. The revived Federal Diet bravely seconded the efforts made by the rulers of the larger States to hurl back the democratic advance, and with such success that for Germany the succeeding decade was a period of unbroken political reaction. One of the Diet's first acts (August 23, 1851) had been to annul the fundamental rights affirmed by the Frankfort Constitution and to call for their repeal or revision in those States whose Governments had adopted them.

Again, as in the persecution of the demagogues thirty years before, it was in Prussia that the policy of reprisals took the most ignoble forms. Hundreds of patriotic men, who had given their best strength of heart and intellect to the service of their country, were compelled to seek the hospitality of more tolerant lands. It was said of France at the time of the revolutions of 1830 and 1848 that "her ideas of liberty

became an article of export." In Germany it was not liberty but the men who loved liberty and sought it that were exported in those days, but for them exportation meant flight from the gaoler and banishment for years or for life. Theodor Mommsen, Ludwig Uhland, Fritz Reuter, Julius Froebel, Georg Herwegh, Heinrich Heine, Gottfried Kinkel, Arnold Ruge, and Richard Wagner were among the intellectuals for whom at that time their country had no longer a home. Of politicians who shared the same fate there were Karl Marx, Ludwig Bamberger, Wilhelm Liebknecht, Johannes Miquel, Karl Schurz, and, not the least noteworthy, Lothar Bucher and Moritz Busch, later to become the agents and confidants of the arch reactionary Otto von Bismarck.

A generation later the fact that a man had been a revolutionary of 'forty-eight was to be a seal of distinction, but at the time fidelity to democratic ideals brought neither honour nor joy. Most of the better-known exiles, who had careers to return to when the time of persecution was overpast, found temporary refuge in England or Switzerland, but the majority of the less known and the unknown crossed the Atlantic and made in the United States a permanent and congenial home. German emigration to America heretofore had for the most part been the emigration of peasants and labourers, broken by poverty or harassed by intolerable feudal customs. With the discovery of this new and kinder fatherland across the seas, where to the wondering exile life seemed to be freedom and freedom life, new types of citizens, higher in social and intellectual status, joined the exodus in ever-increasing numbers, carrying with them education and skill, wealth and enterprise, and above all new hopes and the inspiring sentiment of gratitude of men to whom were offered, as an uncovenanted right, a larger outlook and a consciousness of security and fair-play which had been refused to them by the land of their birth.

BISMARCK - THE FIRST PHASE, 1851-1861

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THE HISTORY OF THE Bund and its Diet for the remaining years of their existence is in the main the history of a more concentrated struggle for leadership in Germany between the two States whose rivalry had been suspended for a brief breathing-space at Olmütz, Prussia renewing her claims as before, Austria tenaciously resisting any change that would diminish her power, not perceiving that by her refusal to concede a little she was risking the loss of all, nor conscious as yet that the superiority of which she boasted was no longer a reality but a phantom. That harmony and understanding would be restored between the rivals already seemed hopeless. They were like members of a family who could be good friends in other people's houses, only not at home. For while their interests as European Powers, if not always identical, were at least as a rule reconcilable, their interests as German States had become permanently antagonistic. They could not both be in the first place, and each of them knew that it was in the other's way.

In his memoirs of that time Count Beust, who entered the Austrian State service too late to influence the course of events, for the catastrophe of 1866 had already occurred, professes to regard the Olmütz agreement as a blunder on Austria's part, and criticizes Schwarzenberg for neglecting to require from Prussia guarantees that the Radowitz Union project should not be revived. He contends that the Austrian Minister failed to appreciate the gravity of the issue involved, viz. whether Austria should continue a member of the Federation, and holds that this question should have been decided when she was still at the height of her strength. All such argument ignores the really vital point, which was that the fundamental issue between Austria and Prussia was not one of federal reform or any constitutional theories, but of power. Guarantees, even if they could have been obtained, would have had value only so long as Austria had been able to enforce observance of them. Austria was still the head of the Federation and in full possession of her old privileged position. Whether that position was to remain unchallenged, however, depended not upon treaties and paper formulas, but upon proof of superior strength; and it was inevitable that, directly such proof was wanting, the leadership of Germany would pass out of her grasp and her ejecton from the Federation follow.

There were already outsiders who clearly recognized whither

events were tending, and who suspected that Prussia was stronger than the resolution of Frederick William IV and Austria weaker than the will of Schwarzenberg. Louis Napoleon suspected it in France, as did Prince Albert and Lord Palmerston, with greater certainty, in England. Visiting Germany in 1844, Lord Palmerston formed the opinion that Prussia even then had the nation's future in her hand. "One cannot visit the country," he wrote from Dresden on October 13th, "without being struck with the great intellectual activity which shows itself in all classes. . . . In short, Prussia is going to lead in German civilization, and as Austria has gone to sleep and will be long before she wakes, Prussia has a fine career open to her for many years to come." He even thought, five years later, that a blunder was committed when Frederick William IV, by refusing the imperial crown, delayed longer the inevitable hegemony of the northern kingdom. It is one of the contradictions of Palmerston's career that he subsequently failed, on more than one critical occasion, to reckon with Prussia according to his early and just valuation.

Not only did the two rivals fight each other within the Diet of the Federation, but they continued to force the rest of the States into partisanship. Austria, being in possession of the presidency, had on her side the advantage of treaty right and the sanction of tradition. Upon most questions she could count upon a majority, for not only did the secondary States as a rule work with her, but some of the smaller States seceded from Prussia and went over to the opposite camp. For a time, therefore, Olmütz seemed to make Austria's position in Germany stronger than before. Where Prussia had a vital interest in breaking down or neutralizing her preponderating influence in the Diet it could only be done by skilful manœuvring or hard bargaining.

A change came in the relations of the two Powers when there appeared in the Diet in 1851, first as understudy to the Prussian envoy, Herr von Rochow (May 11th), then as plenipotentiary (July 15th), Otto von Bismarck. In him Prussia may be said to have recovered her lost will. A deputy in the Prussian United Diet of 1847, in the Prussian Diet of 1849, and in the German Parliament of Erfurt in 1850, and a King's man by descent and predilection, Bismarck very early seemed to be, marked out for distinction in public life. In his own circles he was already spoken of as one of the coming men of the political world. He had first drawn upon himself the King's favourable

notice in 1847 by his ultra-royalist utterances as a member of the United Diet. Since then his opinion had been, held in high regard both by his Sovereign and the Government, and during the events which preceded Olmütz he had been called into counsel in Berlin. His knowledge of human nature, his geniality (when occasion required it), native shrewdness, and mother-wit, and above all his dominating will, born on the fertile soil of the feudal Mark of Brandenburg, singularly fitted him to be the representative at the Federal Diet of a Government which for the present had no hope of asserting its rightful place and gaining its ends save by judicious diplomacy and careful handling of men.

Only the Liberals saw his emergence from comparative obscurity with apprehension. His short career as a parliamentary deputy had justly given him the reputation of a typical reactionary, uncompromising in his attachment to the principle of monarchy by the grace of God and hostile to any concession to the idea of popular sovereignty. A man who could publicly confess that for him "Prussia's honour meant her abstinence from any shameful union with democracy" was not likely to enjoy the confidence of a party which had just tried conclusions with autocracy and had failed in the encounter.

In the Federal Palace and the social centres of Frankfort he had learned all there was to know about the tricks and stratagems, the subtleties and sophistries, the backbiting, eavesdropping, and intrigue which made up the stock-in-trade of the average German diplomat, and the result was that his opinion of the morality of the Diet was no higher than his opinion of its intellectual capacity. According to his later confessions he lived while at Frankfort in an atmosphere of mendacity. To his Austrian colleagues he was wont to say, "It is all the same to me whether you are speaking or the wind is whistling in the chimney-pots, for I do not believe a single word you say." What these colleagues said to him in return is not known, but they thought him bumptious, arrogant and overbearing, and herein did him no injustice. Certainly the members of the Frankfort Diet were not a happy or a harmonious circle.

"Intercourse here," Bismarck wrote from the federal city to his wife on May 18, 1851, "is at bottom nothing more than mutually distasteful espionage. All that people torment themselves about are

trivialities, and these diplomats, with their pompous pettinesses, are already more ridiculous to me than the deputies of the (Prussian) Second Chamber in the consciousness of their dignity. No one, even the most malicious doubter of a democrat, can believe how much *charlatanerie* and pomposity is concealed in this diplomacy."" Heine's well-known song, 'O Bund, du Hund, du bist nicht gesund,'" he wrote to the same correspondent, "will soon become by universal consent the national song of Germany." If, in later years, in his practice of statecraft in a wider arena, Bismarck failed at times to play fairly and to run straight, some part of the blame should be set down to his depressing and demoralizing experiences of the sinuous diplomacy which flourished at Frankfort in the middle of the century.

Bismarck may have regarded the capitulation of Olmütz as unavoidable, as circumstances then were, but to him, as to all Prussian patriots, it was none the less a humiliation which could not be allowed to blemish the national reputation permanently. The episode epitomized for him with poignant faithfulness the entire Austro-Prussian, the entire German, problem. It was the eternal problem of political life and relations everywhere, Suum cuique. Within the sphere of federal government Austria claimed everything: how was Prussia to gain her rightful share of influence? To that problem he was to address himself.

Before his Frankfort days he had been a member of the Great Germany party, and he had hitherto favoured the retention of Austria in the Federation. Almost his last words as a parliamentary deputy had been a frank declaration of his unaltered acceptance of the idea that Austria was "a German Power which had often and gloriously wielded the German sword." Nevertheless, he had taken care to add that Prussia's honour required that "nothing should happen in Germany without her assent, and that whatever Prussia and Austria, after independent deliberation, regarded as reasonable and politically right should be carried through by them as Powers equally responsible for Germany's protection."

Now that the duty of representing Prussia's interests at the Diet fell to him, he was still determined to work hand in hand with Austria, if possible, though he was equally determined that such co-operation should be on the basis of parity and mutual concession. He saw that Prussia must, at all costs, be freed from Austria's influence and

pressure, and doubtful even then whether emancipation would be won without a military struggle, he held that it was Prussia's best policy to husband her strength. Holding that standpoint, he was determined to support in every situation a national policy based on sheer egoism.

For a time large events in European politics overshadowed the federal question and kept both Prussia and Austria occupied in other directions. The first of these events was the Crimean War, regarding which Prussia occupied a position of neutrality and isolation – a position which, however justifiable from the standpoint of national expediency, was certainly far from glorious. It was not the dispute of the Latin and Greek Churches about the Holy Places, nor yet the interests of Turkey's Christian populations, that drew Great Britain into that long and fruitless struggle, but jealousy of Muscovite aggression in the East and a vague fear that unless Russia were checked betimes she would become a danger to Europe. Ten years before, Czar Nicholas I had been urgent in his desire to work hand in hand with Great Britain in the Oriental question. It was in 1844 that he first spoke, in conversation with Lord Aberdeen and Sir Robert Peel, of the "Sick Man." He was then willing to see Great Britain established in Egypt and Crete if only Constantinople could be left in Turkish hands until Russia's hour for occupying it should arrive.

It is probable that the number is few of those who believe in this day that the British nation would have allowed itself to be drawn into that struggle had it had a firmer hand – or any hand at all – upon its own affairs, or understood more clearly the character of the influences which were working towards war. One of these was the intrigue of the wayward and disloyal ambassador at Constantinople, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, long "the voice of England in the East," who systematically disobeyed his instructions and encouraged Turkey to resist Russia's demands by unwarrantable pledges that British support would be forthcoming. Sir James Graham, in August, 1853, warned his colleague, Lord Clarendon, the Foreign Secretary, of the dangerous game which the ambassador was playing, and urged that the Government should be ready to supersede him "without loss of a day." Clarendon himself wrote to Lord John Russell in October that the ambassador had "never entered seriously into the views of the Government and had been making political capital for himself," and again in November that he was "bent on war." There was no secrecy

whatever about Stratford's duplicity – everybody knew it – yet he was nevertheless allowed to remain at his post until the mischief had been done.

It may be true that Russia wanted war with Turkey, but Stratford had determined long before that she would have war with Turkey's friends as well, and that in Oriental policy British Ministers should go his way. Perhaps it was Lord Palmerston's way as well, for that statesman was widely believed to be behind him in the conspiracy. Count Vitzthum's opinion of Stratford is interesting as that of a fellow-diplomat: "Scarcely ever has an ambassador played such a rôle as Lord Stratford at that time, for he ruled not only in Constantinople but in London." On the other hand, France had sent as her representative to the Bosphorus the impetuous M. Lavalette, with the tacit commission that if events did not shape themselves for war he should give them the necessary assistance. Between them the two ambassadors had no difficulty in making trouble.

Louis Napoleon, too, played the game of diplomacy singularly well at England's expense. Cosmopolitan in education and training – for he had studied life and mankind in five countries besides his own, in England, America, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland – this enigmatical man had a positive genius for politics, and he would have made a reputation in that sphere even without the assistance of a distinguished kinship. A Bonaparte more than a Frenchman, the birthmark of the adventurer was upon him, and the spell of the Great Napoleon lured him from an early age into dangerous ways. He had taken part in two insurrections before he was thirty - in the Romagna in 1831 and at Strassburg in 1836. Transported to America for complicity in the second of these, he made a third attempt at a rising in 1840, when he had landed at Boulogne, and for punishment was compelled to sojourn for six years, a prisoner, in the "land of Ham." Escaping to London, he remained there until he was able to return France as a free man in the year of revolutions, 1848. Since his invasion of the sphere of high politics his rise to fame had been uncommonly rapid. Returned a member of the National Assembly in June 1848, he was elected President of the Republic in the following December; three years later, again in December, after a daring *coup d' état,* which gave him a more pliant legislature, he obtained re-election for ten years by an overwhelming vote; and after a further interval of

a year, once more in December, the Prince-President was proclaimed hereditary Emperor as Napoleon III (December 2, 1852).

The *coup d' état* of Paris of 1851 was followed by a *coup d' état* in London, for without seeking the authority either of his Sovereign or his colleagues, because knowing that it would be refused, the Foreign Secretary, the wilful, rash, intemperate, great-hearted Palmerston, promptly acknowledged Napoleon's new status, an act of indiscretion for which he was required to resign office. As a rule, the full significance of acts of national policy is seen only in later years. It is certain that England's ready endorsement of Louis Napoleon's *coup d' état* strengthened the ties of friendship between her and France and paved the way for the conclusion of the alliance which made the two countries comrades in arms in the Crimean War, but it is also arguable that a less cordial recognition of the Emperor might have made that war impossible, since France could not or would not have waged it alone.

Never before had a British statesman been questioned by his Sovereign upon maxims of statecraft as was Lord Granville, the succeeding Minister, by Queen Victoria, who, alarmed by Lord Palmerston's escapade, urgently wished to know what the foreign policy of her Government really was and by what principles it was guided. "The Queen, considering times to have now changed, thinks that there is no reason why we should any longer confine ourselves to mere abstract principles, such as non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries, moral support to liberal institutions, protection to British subjects, etc., etc." To this challenge, of which the real authorship could not have been uncertain, Lord Granville gave the reply, at that time so truly and pathetically British, that "it is not the policy of this country to make engagements except in view of the circumstances of the moment."

Nevertheless, it was not long before the British Cabinet was blindly abandoning itself to Napoleon's leading, and the pace quickened when, within a year, Palmerston was recalled to office as Home Secretary in Lord Aberdeen's ill-fated Ministry (December 1852), in which Lord John Russell and Lord Clarendon were successively Foreign Secretary. Trading astutely on the nation's fear of Russian aggression in the East, and its superstitious concern for the integrity of the Turkish Empire in Europe, Napoleon gradually drew England into

the orbit of French policy, and henceforth their course was identical, and it made directly for war. Foreign distractions were at that time, if not a necessity, at least a convenience to the new Emperor. He had to cover up the recent *coup d'état;* the thirst for prestige was already upon him; and he welcomed an opportunity for trying the spirit and efficiency of his army. He had declared at Bordeaux (October 9, 1852): "Certain persons say the Empire is only war. But I say the Empire is peace (*l'empire c'est la paix*), for France wishes it." He understood the volatile emotions of his countrymen too well, however, to be in any doubt that their love of tranquillity was at the time a pose, and that a successful war would be more popular than a humdrum peace.

The Crimean campaign was both designed and decided on by Napoleon; England came in because for safety's sake he needed an ally. Lord Aberdeen, as the leader of the "moral influence" party in his Cabinet, earnestly strove to curb the warlike proclivities of Palmerston and Russell, but in the end he, too, succumbed to the dominating influences. It was literally true, as Aberdeen and Clarendon both said, that England "drifted" into that great blunder; never was war more lightly trifled with; never were the objects of a war less carefully considered, its chances less carefully weighed, or its prosecution less carefully planned. Later, Aberdeen wrote (1857) that the war, though "most unwise and unnecessary," was "strictly justifiable in itself," yet he confessed, "It is possible that by a little more energy and vigour . . . in Downing Street it might have been prevented"; and to the last that tragedy of errors lay heavily upon his sensitive conscience. An enterprise entered upon with such an absence of reflection and honest conviction could not have gone well. Nevertheless, the nation unquestionably welcomed the war, at first apathetically, but enthusiastically when once its patriotic and militant, instincts had been roused; for forty years of peace had dulled its perception of the horrors of the battlefield, and made it ready to endorse this method of settling a dispute over issues which it never understood.

Russian troops had crossed the Pruth into Moldavia in July 1853, and as her demand for their withdrawal was disregarded, Turkey declared war upon the aggressor on October 5th. Hostilities broke out at once between these Powers, but it was not until the following March that France and Great Britain actively took the Turkish side.

Foreseeing where events were tending, Prussia and Austria concluded a convention (April 20, 1854) by which they agreed to stand aside as onlookers but to put armies in the field if their own interests required it. Soon it became clear that this Laodicean attitude pleased neither side, and both from the East and the West came the demand that the two Powers should declare themselves either cold or hot. The Court and Government in Berlin were divided upon the question of Prussia's obligation and interest in the matter, though the overwhelming weight of influence was on the side of neutrality. That was hardly in accordance with the expectation of the Czar, who, when asked in 1853 by the British Ambassador in St. Petersburg what Prussia would do were he to go to war, replied at once that she "would approve as a matter of course." Accustomed as he had been to give to Prussia her marching orders, as he had so lately done at Olmütz, it seemed inconceivable that his vassal would fail him in the critical moment. Both before the outbreak of the war and later the Czar made strenuous efforts to attract to his side both Prussia and Austria, basing his claim to the latter's reciprocal help upon the great service which he had rendered to the Emperor in the suppression of the Hungarian revolution, but it was in vain. How far the two German Great Powers might have restrained their old ally had they been seriously disposed to do so, is a question which has been much discussed. It is at least probable – and there are German writers who accept the view – that if at the outset they had resolutely discouraged the Czar from embarking upon a course of action in which they were not prepared to support him, he would have drawn back and peace might have been preserved.

Frederick William IV, in particular, has been severely judged for a neutrality which was throughout so much more benevolent to Russia than to the Western Powers. His position, however, was one of great difficulty. He had to choose between three conflicting sentiments – loyalty to his brother-in-law the Czar and the dynastic tie between the two countries; loyalty to and a desire to co-operate with Austria, the head of the Germanic family, whose union with the Western Powers was probable; and a weaker though still real sympathy for England as a Protestant Power, whose Sovereign he sincerely revered. Of these contending influences the most powerful was that which drew him towards Russia, and recalling the injunction contained in his father's

will, “Do not neglect to promote unity between the European Powers: above all, may Prussia, Russia, and Austria never separate from each other,” this was the influence which prevailed. Even had it been insufficient, two other considerations would have made it impossible for him to join the allies; one was his strong prejudice against Napoleon as the representative of a revolutionary order of ideas, and the other his repugnance to the idea of Christians fighting Christians with the aid and in support of a Mohammedan Power. Secretly also he entertained the hope that it might be his privilege to come upon the scene at the proper time as a mediator – a part more consonant with his feelings as a Christian King than that of a combatant.

Prussia had certainly no obvious interest in adopting an attitude of active antagonism against Russia, the extension of whose influence in the East she had not even Austria’s reasons for fearing, and the expectation that she would as a matter of course fall into line with the Western Powers had no other justification than the accepted tradition that Prussia had no right to have a policy of her own in European affairs. On the other hand, what was open to justifiable reproach in her action at that time was the fact that while professing neutrality Prussia in effect rendered to Russia every service in her power. While making fair speeches to the allies, the King was all the time assuring the Czar of his unchanging fidelity. The younger Niebuhr, his private secretary, wrote with scholarly pedantry: “I cannot indeed reproach our policy with lack of outward truth, but I do charge it with insincerity towards ourselves” (August 22, 1854). The fact was that, however much might have been said for an attitude of strict and impartial passivity, the double policy actually followed lacked truth both in the inward and outward parts.

Political parties were divided on the subject. The Liberals in general welcomed the hope of seeing a blow struck at Russia, as the stronghold of reaction, wished Prussia to assist in a proceeding so desirable, and were distressed beyond measure when it became clear that their country was not to be the active ally of Western progress, but its surreptitious antagonist. To the Conservatives, on the other hand, the Czar appealed as the only sure bulwark on the Continent against revolution and because his Government was still what they wished that of Prussia to become again, an unmitigated autocracy, and their sympathies were, therefore, altogether on Russia’s side. Both

of these parties had powerful allies in the Press, the pro-Russian case being advocated, as of old, by the *Kreuzzeitung* and the anti-Russian case by the *Preussisches Wochenblatt*, a journal which came into prominence about this time as the organ of the Bethmann-Hollweg, Goltz, and Pourtalès group.

Many of the extremer feudalists openly advocated a defensive alliance with the Czar in opposition to the Western Powers, obnoxious because of their Liberal institutions, even more than to Turkey. The most prominent member of this party opposed any such heroic display of principle. This was Herr von Bismarck, Prussia's envoy at Frankfort, whose influence both in the Federal Diet and in Berlin was exerted in favour of a policy of strict neutrality. The immediate interests involved in the war were no concern of his; all he cared for was how Prussia might benefit by the coming confusion and the later readjustments. An opportunist standpoint, neither strong nor ingenuous, was avowed in the advice which he gave to Manteuffel during the war: "We should make it doubtful as to our joining Russia or the Western Powers, and this would increase our influence on the course of events." All the time he was determined to do his best to prevent Prussia from taking sides either actively or passively against the Czar. Already he was considering the help which Prussia might need in coming years in the solution of her own national problems, and viewing the question from this standpoint he was convinced that the friendship of Russia was for Prussia essential. Comparing the advantages offered as allies by Russia, France, and Austria, he wrote: "We must look abroad for allies, and among the European Powers Russia is to be had on the cheapest terms; she wishes only to row in the East, the two others wish to grow at our expense." Throughout the negotiations Bismarck was constantly being called to Berlin by the King, in order to advise Manteuffel and keep him in the path of unwavering neutrality whenever he showed a disposition to deviate towards the Western Powers.

The war did not prosper as the allies had hoped, for the task before them proved for a long time greater than their powers. As time went by, and no decisive result was reached, the pressure of the Western Powers upon Russia's neighbours increased. Every argument and inducement they could think of was used to persuade Austria and Prussia to abandon their attitude of embarrassing neutrality for one of

active co-operation, with a view to the speedy end of the conflict, but without effect.

Amongst the King's advisers one man at least was altogether convinced that his country was not doing its duty in thus standing aside. This was the Prince of Prussia, whose letters to Count Bernstorff on the Crimean War are in tone, temper, and manly spirit among the most statesmanlike documents he ever penned. He had no wish to see Russia unduly weakened, but he regarded her pretensions as a menace to the rest of Europe, and was wishful that she should be required to recognize that there were limits beyond which she could not be allowed to go. In a letter of August 1, 1854, he protested against "the dishonest and uncertain course we have adopted, which is the reason why I must give up taking any further part in affairs." "There can be nothing more difficult," he wrote later, "than to have to defend a policy which offers so few points capable of being defended." He was troubled by apprehensions as to how Prussia would stand after the war. "Our position will be most awkward," he wrote, "since we want to remain merely spectators of the drama, and if we succeed in this who will inquire about the spectators when the play is over? It is only the actors who are concerned in the success of the piece." To make the family division more complete, while the Queen was just as devoted to Russia as was her husband, and far less discriminating in her manner of showing it, the wife of the Prince of Prussia was warmly attached to the cause of the Western Powers.

Manteuffel in theory agreed with the Prince, but if his spirit was often willing, his flesh was always weak. He pronounced the strongest possible judgment upon the equivocal policy for which he was responsible when he admitted in a despatch to Count Bernstorff that if Prussia followed consistency or conviction she would take the side of the allies. " Prussia," he said, "though by no means always sharing the views of the Western Powers, and therefore not disposed to acquiesce in the demands arising there from, where she does not esteem such demands to be consonant with her own interests, is yet far from denying that fundamentally she is in agreement with the Western Powers." Manteuffel's maxim was "Cold blood and not too much action." "I cannot understand," he wrote on May 27, 1854, "the short-sightedness of many people who are eternally urging resolution. This resolution would mean nothing else than the surrender of the Prussian

standpoint and self-sacrifice for one of the two parties." Yet all the time neutral Prussia was freely exporting arms to Russia, insomuch that France threatened a blockade of the Baltic ports, and in the middle of the war a Russian loan was floated in Berlin.

Both in England and France the feeling against Prussia was a bitter one, for the two nations felt keenly that Prussia was not playing fairly. In February, 1855, Lord John Russell went to Berlin in the hope of moving the King by earnest expostulation, but convincing himself on his arrival there that an interview would be futile, he did not seek it, and returned home without presenting his credentials. So far did the King's bias for Russia carry him that he dismissed Bunsen, Bonin, and other advisers who had made themselves objectionable to St. Petersburg. Even when Austria at last (December, 1854) joined the allies, Prussia continued to stand out and to neutralize their efforts. Invited on December 16th by the three Powers jointly to throw in her lot with them, there seemed for a moment a chance that this step would be taken, but as soon as Manteuffel professed to be willing the King again refused, and showed greater alacrity in assuring the Czar that he had resisted temptation than in communicating his decision to the other Powers. Manteuffel's defence was that if Prussia had joined it would have been as a "mere appendix to Austria." Lord Clarendon told Count Bernstorff that his country had in fact become "a Russian province," adding bluntly that the policy followed by his Government was "neither European nor German nor yet Prussian." By this time Piedmont had joined the allies with a small force (January, 1855), less from interest in the questions in dispute than from a desire to win her spurs in a European struggle and to establish claims to reciprocal service in the cause of Italian unity.

The Czar's death on March 2, 1855, was the occasion of further efforts to accelerate the lagging steps of peace; yet still the war dragged on, and it was only on the fall of Sebastopol in September, after a siege of 350 days, that the worn-out combatants agreed to cease hostilities.

Prussia by her equivocal methods had earned another Olmütz, and the allied Powers did not spare her humiliation. "If when a peace is arrived at," the Prince Consort of England wrote in March, 1854, "to which Prussia has in no way contributed, but in the way of which she, on the contrary, acted as a stumbling-block, she should then set up

claims, she will be astounded at the manner in which they will be received." Prussia did set up claims, and the effect was that which had been predicted. When a conference to consider conditions of peace had been agreed upon and the Berlin Government claimed to be admitted as of right, the claim was promptly refused. The Prince of Prussia at least was conscious that the rebuff was well merited, though it deeply hurt his pride. "How can we possibly be trusted?" he wrote: "we are already paying for our shifty behaviour." When Count Bernstorff protested to Lord Palmerston, who early in 1855 had formed his first Ministry, that England would yet be glad to welcome Prussia as an ally, Palmerston answered surlily: "Prussia never wants to approach England unless she needs help, so that we are perfectly well able to do without her." After Austria had withdrawn opposition to Prussia's admission, France and England still resisted, and though, in the end, she was allowed to be represented, it was only on the King's urgent entreaty and by sufferance. "More than this," wrote the Prince of Prussia, "we could not properly expect nor demand, since we never had the courage to agree to the conditions which the enemy had accepted. So that although we at last desisted from our course of not very immaculate policy, we have still come off with a black eye." The humiliation rankled in Bismarck's mind for long years. He was for playing a Coriolanus part, and keeping away from the conference – for renouncing a favour of which the acceptance meant certain loss of dignity.

The terms of peace were embodied in the Treaty of Paris of March 30, 1856. The stipulations included the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, the neutralization of the Black Sea and its opening to commerce, the prohibition of ships of war within that water and of Russian or Turkish arsenals upon its shores, and the retention by the Danubian Principalities of existing rights under Turkey, under the guarantee of the Powers. On the other hand, the Sultan renewed his unsubstantial promises – no guarantees were offered – of better government for his Christian subjects. Count Beust relates that on returning from Paris the French ambassador to Vienna, Baron Bourqueney, summed up the treaty in the words, "*Quand vous lisez ce traité vous vous demandez, quel est le vaincu, quel est le vainqueur*?" Events were to prove that it accomplished little and settled nothing. Lord Palmerston gave the Black Sea clauses in particular a life of

fourteen years at the most, and therein he prophesied truly. Both Great Britain and France renounced territorial claims – the latter unwillingly – and when the Government of Piedmont rashly advanced them, it was bidden to be content with a purely moral reward.

Great Britain and France were equally glad to be out of a struggle which brought them no glory, asserted no high principle, and achieved no lasting purpose of good, but their blunders and misfortunes did not mitigate the egoism of the part played by Prussia, whose abstention was dictated not by moral scruples, or any fine balancing of right and wrong, but by a calculated expediency. What Bismarck thought privately of his countrymen, whom he had done his best to compromise, appears from a letter written by him in the following year to Ludwig von Gerlach (May 2, 1857), in which he said: "We are the best-natured and least dangerous of politicians, yet in reality no one trusts us; we are regarded as uncertain as allies and harmless as enemies."

On the whole Great Britain lost most by the war. Soon France cruelly jilted her. The Emperor had found unattractive an alliance which had bound him not to seek territorial advantages, and he resented his emergence from the exhausting struggle without material gain. Fearing that Great Britain would continue to place a brake upon his ambitions, he gave a ready response to Russia's advances, and soon his late enemy stood nearer to him than his late ally. In September, 1857, the Czar Alexander II and Napoleon met at Stuttgart as friends. For Great Britain, however, the war produced a crop of further troubles with Russia, the end of which came only half a century later. Only Turkey remained her friend, and Turkey's attachment was never other than an embarrassment, for it carried with it grave responsibilities and perplexities.

Having during the Crimean War asserted independence of Austria by refusing to be drawn into the alliance with her against Russia, Prussia now became bolder and in the Italian campaign of 1859 allowed her rival to experience the distress of complete isolation. No Power ever went to war hampered by a larger moral handicap of European antipathy than Austria when on April 27, 1859, her troops crossed the Ticino and entered the dominions of the King of Sardinia. Just a month before, Lord Derby, the British Prime Minister, had hazarded the opinion that "the prospects of peace have never been so

bright as to-day," words anticipatory of a similar and still more unfortunate prophecy made by the British Foreign Office in 1870. War had been brewing for many months, and all the rest of the world was expecting it. Austria's act was a formal declaration of hostility against the Italian unity movement, and it drew upon her the opprobrium of all friends of nationalism and liberty. Lord Palmerston, the friend of "struggling nationalities," faithfully reflected English sentiment towards Austria in words written to Lord Granville on January 30th. "As for myself," he said, "I am very Austrian north of the Alps, but very anti-Austrian south of the Alps. The Austrians have no business in Italy, and they are a public nuisance there. They govern their own provinces ill, and are the props and encouragers of bad government in all the other States of the Peninsula except in Piedmont, where fortunately they have no influence." Austria, however, held her Italian territories in virtue of the Treaty of Vienna of 1815, under which she regained the provinces which for a time had been lost to France, and being a party to that treaty, England was bound to neutrality.

Louis Napoleon had no such scruple. He had made the cause of Italian unity his own and had left Austria in no doubt that any attack upon the King of Sardinia would be regarded as a declaration of war against himself. Already in foreign politics Napoleon had begun to play with certain master phrases, like "nationality," "equilibrium," and the policy of "compensations." His devotion to the cause of nationality was sincere and sometimes unselfish. It showed that he shared to the full the Frenchman's enthusiasm for great ideas, and it also seemed to place him in the direct line of his illustrious ancestor, who built new kingdoms upon the ruins of old empires. In espousing the Italian question, however, Napoleon had two ends to serve – Italy's and his own. Meeting Cavour at Plombières by arrangement on July 20, 1858, he agreed with him upon a plan of which the ostensible object was the emancipation of Lombardy from the Austrian lords of misrule, though it was a condition that France was to acquire Nice and Savoy as the price of her services. A third but essential part of the agreement was the marriage of Prince Napoleon with Princess Clothilde, daughter of Victor Emmanuel. The meeting had to the last been veiled with the secrecy that befitted its purpose. The French Foreign Minister himself was unaware of it, for in the midst of the interview there arrived a telegram from Walewski informing the

Emperor that “Cavour was at Plombières.” The Chancelleries of Europe only learned at a later date exactly what was arranged at that time, but already suspicion of Napoleon’s territorial greed was creating widespread uneasiness. These suspicions the Emperor himself did little to allay, in spite of his reiterated intention to “respect treaties.” “I have no ambitious views like the first Emperor,” he told Lord Cowley at that time, “but if other countries gain anything France must gain something also.”

On January 1, 1859, at his New Year reception of the Diplomatic Corps, Napoleon said to the Austrian ambassador, Baron Hübner, that “although the relations between the two Empires were not such as he could desire, he begged to assure the Emperor of Austria that his personal feelings towards his Majesty remained unaltered.” Europe mentally reversed the order of the phrases, in order to give them their due significance, and awaited the sequel with anxiety. Victor Emmanuel. promptly responded to his partner’s lead. In opening the Piedmont Chamber a few days later he said:” Our horizon is not Clear . . . for while we would respect treaties we cannot remain insensible to the cry of anguish which reaches us from so many parts of Italy.” Everywhere the words were interpreted as giving substance to Napoleon’s vague suggestions of coming disturbance. Good advice was freely offered to all the three rulers concerned by disinterested friends, and had it been heeded peace might have been preserved. The Prince (now Prince Regent) of Prussia guardedly but pointedly urged both Austria and France to refrain from provocative action in any direction, and above all not to interfere with existing treaties. The same pacific influence was offered by Great Britain. While Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort used all their powers of persuasion upon Napoleon, the Government sought to restrain Austria.

On January 10th Lord Malmesbury, the Foreign Secretary, addressed through Lord Augustus Loftus, the British ambassador in Vienna, a grave warning to the Austrian Government imploring it to cultivate good relations with France, to co-operate heartily in the carrying out of the necessary reforms in the Central Italian States, and generally to abstain from any interference of an aggressive character in Italian affairs. The arrogant and self-willed Count Buol-Schauenstein had become President of the Council and Foreign Secretary on Schwarzenberg’s death (April 5, 1852.), and with true

Austrian reluctance to face facts, he ignored the warning. “I know of no Italian question,” he told the ambassador. “I can understand a Danish or a Swedish, but I recognize no Italian question.” He also refused to negotiate for the removal of Austrian troops from the Roman States, remarking: “We entered those States without any previous arrangement with France, and we can leave them in like manner.” Buol forgot that intruders who, though they may have entered by the door, neglect to withdraw betimes, have often to make a violent exit by the window. Urged by Loftus to give at least the assurance that Austria would not move a soldier across the Italian frontier without previous agreement with France, he flatly declined to do so. A special mission to Vienna, undertaken at his Government’s request by Lord Cowley, then British ambassador in Paris, failed to produce the hoped-for conciliatory effect.

Towards the end of March the proposal of a European congress was made by Russia with Napoleon’s acquiescence, and the prospects of peace seemed for a moment to become brighter when the British and French Governments agreed to press upon Austria and Sardinia a scheme of disarmament. Sorely against his will Cavour accepted the proposal, albeit hoping that Austria would reject it. For Cavour wanted war, convinced that the hour had come for striking the blow that was to win for his country independence. He was also prepared to pay the full price of so great a victory: for he did not want national liberty as a gift. Just before war broke out he wrote to the Italian General La Marmora: “In order that the war may reach a fortunate issue we must prepare for greater efforts. Woe to us if we triumph solely by the aid of France.” Austria’s refusal of a congress except on her own terms made it certain that Cavour’s wish would be gratified.

On April 19th Count Buol peremptorily called upon the King of Sardinia to disarm, and threatened that failing compliance within three days Austrian troops would enter his territory. Knowing that France was behind him, the King refused, and the threat was duly carried out. Now Napoleon was as good as his word. Receiving Austria’s invasion of Piedmont as a direct challenge, he responded to it with masterly promptness. Despatching one force of 40,000 men by sea, he hurried a second across the Alps to the help of Victor Emmanuel’s menaced army, and it entered Piedmont at the end of April. On May 3rd Napoleon formally declared war on Austria. A

succession of small engagements culminated in the decisive French victory of Magenta (June 4th), followed closely by that of Solferino (June 24th), and within a month Austria found herself hopelessly outclassed and beaten.

The Emperor Francis Joseph had already urgently sought help from Prussia, and sought it as a right even more than a favour. His idea was that a German army should occupy Napoleon on the Rhine, leaving Austria to settle with Sardinia alone, as she had done to such purpose at Novara ten years before. His invitation had been supported by the Governments of most of the secondary States, which regarded Prussia as bound in duty to lead them in a concerted expedition for the relief of their hard-pressed ally. Only Prussia had held back, the Prince Regent imposing the condition that he should have command of the whole of the German federal forces, while the Emperor was willing to concede to him only a joint command. So much time was lost over negotiations that by the time Prussia seemed willing to move Napoleon had completed the work of conquest, and it was too late for help to be of use.

Disgusted at what he regarded as Prussia's treachery, fearing also that worse defeat than he had already sustained might permanently compromise Austria's position in Germany and correspondingly increase the prestige of Prussia, Francis Joseph hastily concluded the Peace of Villafranca (July 11th), by which he ceded the greater part of Lombardy to Napoleon for retrocession to Sardinia, but retained Venetia subject to the condition that it became part of a Confederation of Italian States, of which the Pope was to be the honorary President. The dispossessed rulers of Parma, Modena, and Tuscany were to have been restored to their thrones, but in face of the strong national spirit prevailing this proved impossible, and these territories were shortly afterwards incorporated in Sardinia.

The unity party in Italy had counted on a war to a finish, and the war was to have seen the extrusion of Austria from the peninsula. At the time, therefore, the Peace of Villafranca created great disappointment. Cavour condemned it bitterly, and resigned rather than be a party to it. Napoleon had declared his intention to "free Italy from the Alps to the Adriatic." After Magenta he had still addressed to the Italians from Milan the seductive words, "Animated by the sacred fire of patriotism, be soldiers to-day, for to-morrow you

will be citizens of a great country." Even now, in a proclamation to his army, he spoke of Italy as "henceforth the mistress of her own destinies." Italian patriots, however, only saw that Napoleon had alone determined the conditions of peace and that these conditions left their country still far from unification or freedom. The likelihood is that the Emperor never once wished Italy to be completely unified. His idea was that she should be divided into a northern and a southern kingdom, with a papal enclave between, as a sort of buffer State. The Peace of Villafranca was duly confirmed at Zurich in November. In the midst of the war, of which one result was that Italy ceased to be, in Metternich's words, "une expression géographique," that aged statesman passed out of a world with whose political ideas he had no longer anything in common (June 11th), and knowing that even his own Neapolitan dukedom had become an anachronism.

The chagrin of the Italian people was increased when in due time Napoleon sent in his bill, the charge being the cession of Nice and Savoy, according to the agreement of Plombières. Not Italy only but all Europe condemned this transaction as an outrage upon political morality and public law. In claiming these territories, Napoleon, indeed, spoke speciously of the "natural" and "historical" frontiers of France, but the world at large regarded his act in its true light, as one of spoliation. Cavour was never proud of the bargain which he had struck at Plombières, and he gave to it the proper label when he said to Baron de Talleyrand, as the latter signed the formal treaty of cession on Napoleon's behalf, "*Et maintenant vous voilà nos complices!*" For the sake of appearances the Emperor submitted the question of the future overlordship of the acquired territories to a *plébiscite*. France was then in virtual possession, however, and the manufacture of public opinion was not difficult, so that the overwhelming vote of approval which she received had no great moral value. The historian Freeman stated the truth of this transaction fairly when he said that for half a day's work Napoleon had taken two days' pay.

The episode of Savoy and Nice showed Napoleon to the world in his true colours as a conspirator against the territorial settlement of the Continent as confirmed by the Congress of Vienna. He had not long been Emperor before he had sprung upon Europe all sorts of disquieting schemes of annexation. M. Guizot wrote of him to Lord Aberdeen on December 21, 1851: "*Comme la situation deviendra*

difficile, comme il a l'esprit chimérique et réveur, il se pourrait bien qu'un jour, pour échapper à ses embarras intérieurs, il révât et cherchât quelque remaniement territorial qui relevât sa popularité. Peut-être même rêve-t-il déjà." He had, indeed, even then set his imagination to work, for he was a born intriguer, and so long as he had to do with intellects of the second rank he invariably intrigued with success. In 1852 he suggested to Schwarzenberg a bold project of partition generously devised so as to give each of the Continental Great Powers something. Austria was to have Moldavia and Wallachia, Prussia Hanover and Oldenburg, Russia Constantinople, and France the Rhine frontier and Belgium. His ingenuity in disposing of other nations' territory was similarly exercised in relation to Africa; for five years later, when at Osborne (August, 1857), he suggested to the Prince Consort of England that Morocco should go to Spain, a part of Tripoli to Sardinia, Egypt to England, and a part of Syria to Austria. His idea was that the Mediterranean should become, not a French lake as his uncle had planned, but a European, the whole of the African littoral passing into the possession of the appropriate Continental Powers; only Germany was not at that time to have a share.

These wholesale proposals were of a speculative character, however, and perhaps intended only to afford the pretext for his really serious design, which was the recovery of the eastern frontier of France as it was prior to the second Peace of Paris of November 20, 1815. Napoleon's hope of regaining the Rhenish territories then restored to Germany increased with the conclusion of the alliance with Great Britain at the time of the Crimean War. Upon that alliance he built many schemes which were fated not to be realized. In sundry conversations with Lord Clarendon, the British Foreign Secretary, during the war, and particularly in 1856, he had asked if Great Britain would acquiesce in the holding of a European Congress "*pour remanier les traités et la carte de l'Europe*," which meant for France the pushing forward of her frontier eastwards. Clarendon did his utmost to dissuade him from entertaining any such illusory idea, but on each occasion with only momentary success. To the Prince Consort in August of the following year he spoke of his wish to see the treaties of 1815 revised: "they were bad," he said, "they had been frequently infringed, and they remained as a memorial of the union of Europe against France." He then advanced a claim to the Palatinate, the

fortress of Landau, Saarbrücken, and Saarlouis. Warned by the Prince that he was venturing upon treacherous ground, he refrained from further pressing his views, yet without relinquishing the hope of their fulfilment, though convinced that for support he must look elsewhere. Already he had made overtures in another quarter – Prussia.

In the seizure of Savoy and Nice the Emperor's designs against his neighbours' landmarks took for the first time practical shape. No European statesman had been on more confidential terms with Napoleon, or had done him better service, than Lord Palmerston, but even his faith and patience were now exhausted. It was Palmerston's indignant protests and not John Bright's "Perish Savoy!" speech which voiced the true mind of England over the affair. "The Emperor's mind," he wrote to Lord Cowley in April, 1860, "seems as full of schemes as a warren is full of rabbits, and like rabbits his schemes go to ground for the moment to avoid notice or antagonism." When in the previous month the French special envoy to London, Count Flahault, on the eve of his departure for Paris, asked what message he might take back to Napoleon, Palmerston bluntly told him that he suspected his master of playing a double game and that if he wanted war with England he could have it, adding the assurance that the result would not be to his liking. "France," he wrote later in the same year (November 2nd), "is an essential element in the balance of power in Europe and, I may say, in the world. All that we want is that France should be content with what she is, and should not take up the schemes and policy of the first Napoleon, which many things of late lead us to think she has an inclination to do." The unrest caused by Napoleon's territorial manœuvring became at last so great that in the summer of 1860 Lord John Russell on behalf of Great Britain concluded a formal agreement with the Prussian and Austrian Governments, whereby each of the three Powers pledged itself to make known to the others any proposal affecting the existing equilibrium of Europe which came to its knowledge.

Prussia's part in the Italian war has never ceased to afford material for controversy. What was the real explanation of her failure to intervene in Austria's behalf? Two theories have been advanced, and both of them will always have adherents. One is that Prussia's abstention was deliberate, and was a retaliatory measure intended to avenge long years of insult and humiliation, to pay back old scores,

compel Austria to experience the mortification of isolation, and so bring home to her the value and advisability of Prussia's friendship. According to this view, Prussia wanted Austria to be beaten, and purposely delayed action until help was too late. Bismarck was amongst those of the King's advisers who were in favour of desertion pure and simple. He had no desire to see Prussia's resources pledged to the support of Austrian interests abroad, knowing that the time was soon coming when all her strength would be needed for a contest with the traditional adversary at home. " Austria," he wrote in 1854, "can demand actual military assistance only when Germany is threatened with war which has not been provoked by wilful aggression on the part of Austria herself. Neither our duty nor our interest goes beyond this. If we are to go further, Austria must name a definite joint aim, and state exactly what she proposes." In return for assistance against France, however, Austria offered to Prussia nothing at all save a fair prospect of disaster. Bismarck was at that time ambassador at St. Petersburg, and there Gortehakoff told him that if Prussia took sides against France, Russia would enter the field against both of the Germanic Powers. For that reason, if for no other, Bismarck advocated a policy of abstention, convinced that directly Prussia interfered on Austria's side she would be betrayed. "From the moment that we took the war upon ourselves," he wrote to his wife in one of the few domestic letters in which he touched on politics (June 28, 1859), "I should less fear France than Austria." "With the first shot fired by us on the Rhine," he wrote four days later, "there would be an end to the Austro-Italian war, and instead a war with Russia and France would take the stage, a war in which Austria, as soon as we had taken the burden from her shoulders, would give us just as much or as little help as might be compatible with her own interests." It was widely believed in Berlin that directly signs appeared of a determination to intervene Napoleon intended to transfer the theatre of war from Italy to Germany.

The other view is that the Prince Regent honestly intended to go to the assistance of his federal ally, but in his own time, as determined by the facts of the military situation as he knew them. The Prince himself said later that it was his policy "to allow the French to be fairly engaged in Italy, so that at the moment when Germany declared war upon France we should only find in the latter country a

comparatively small portion of its armies, and that thus our game would be made easier." There seems to be no justification for doubting the Prince's good faith; his straightforwardness on the Crimean War question entitles him to credence.

Not only so, but Napoleon firmly believed that Prussia was bent on attacking him, and also feared that if Prussia came in on Austria's side Russia would refuse to help him. His explanation of the sudden peace, that the war threatened to become a larger undertaking than was proportionate to the French interests involved, was no doubt, from his standpoint, sufficient and convincing. Replying to the Senators and deputies who welcomed him back at St. Cloud, he said: "When the destinies of my country seemed in peril I made peace." Not for the first time in his career, therefore, he acted the part of a wise opportunist. The best of his troops were locked up in Italy, and it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to oppose a German army on the Rhine with an equal force. At the beginning of July, indeed, apprehensive that Prussia might enter the struggle, he invited the British Government to intervene as mediator and suggested an armistice on terms which would have saved the face of France. Lord Palmerston was unwilling to pull chestnuts out of the fire for Napoleon, and the combatants were left to do their own bargaining. Finally, it is probable that the toll of life entailed by the victory of Solferino had frightened Napoleon, whose nerves had not been schooled by the severe discipline of the battlefield.

The Italian war, while it may have led Prussia to overestimate the military strength of France, had for her the inestimable advantage that it compelled Austria to reveal to the world for the first time her inherent weakness. Henceforth, although she continued to be an obstacle to the settlement of the German question, she ceased to be a source of terror. The effect of Prussia's attitude was further to embitter the relations between the two Powers. After the conclusion of peace the Emperor of Austria complained bitterly that he had been compelled to accept humiliating conditions because "his natural friends, upon whom he had counted, had not given to him the assistance which he had expected," and in a later manifesto issued from Schönbrunn he still spoke harshly of Prussia's desertion of him. Nevertheless, the ill-humour soon passed away, and through the mediation of the King of Bavaria a meeting of the Emperor and Prince

Regent was arranged at Teplitz in the year following the war (July, 1860).

Political events at home had in the meantime taken a new direction. A well-defined era in the life both of Prussia and Germany closed, and a new chapter in the history of national unity opened, when in the autumn of 1858 Frederick William IV, smitten by insanity, was compelled to institute a regency in favour of his brother the Prince of Prussia, afterwards William I. Nearly a year before the Prince had been made quasi Regent with the title of "deputy," for the reactionary Manteuffel Ministry would not trust him further. Now, the need having become greater, he insisted upon a full regency, and he had his way, the disabled Sovereign living in restraint at Sans-Souci until his death on January 2, 1861.

It cannot be said that the King's disappearance was a misfortune for his country, for as a statesman he had been a failure. He never spared himself for his people's sake, but his nervous activity was tragically poor in fruitful results, and where his zeal was greatest its objects were usually the most impracticable and the least to be desired. No Sovereign had a kinglier spirit, but none a less kingly understanding; he could bear the trappings of kingship with perfect dignity, but its responsibilities were altogether beyond his powers. The impression left by a study of his character and public acts is that of a man of unpractical and irresolute character, suited as few others to adorn private life in spheres in which graces count for more than utilitarian gifts, but utterly unfitted to rule men or direct affairs. Many people have ideas, but only the few have good ones: and Frederick William IV was only too often to be counted to the majority. Always well-meaning and benevolent, his wish to do the right thing was constantly neutralized by his instinct for choosing the wrong.

His idiosyncrasies and extravagances might have been kept in check had he had around him advisers strong enough to override his emotional judgments, but these, partly through his own fault and altogether to his misfortune, were lacking, and a disposition to listen to many counsels was not supplemented by any assurance that he would end by following the wisest. A bad strong ruler is almost less dangerous to a State than a weak good one. A full-blooded and less high-principled Hohenzollern of the type of Albrecht Achilles was far more useful to the commonwealth than this virtuous, dreamy, star-

gazing mystic, nursing in his crazy brain impossible schemes and pursuing fantastic will-of-the-wisps in the pathetic belief that they were marvels of statesmanship. Whatever his limitations, however, and they were many, the fact remains that his was a noble character – as noble in its larger faults as in its virtues.

The Prince of Prussia was at this time sixty-two years old, yet he had come little before the public gaze since the revolutionary days of 1848, when his supposed hostility to the constitutional movement made him very unpopular and led to his withdrawal for a time to England. Earlier still, he was believed to have conspired against Hardenberg when that Minister still honestly wished to give Prussia a constitution, and to have hardened the will of his father Frederick William III whenever there had been signs of a disposition to yield to popular demands. Yet these political indiscretions of his youth, if indeed he was guilty of them, had left no ill-will in the national mind. His training had been that of arms rather than of statecraft; he had been in the army for nearly fifty years, and he was a soldier with heart and soul. Yet in recent years he had repeatedly given evidence of ripe political judgment and a clear grasp of foreign questions. He had long been in conflict with his brother's weak and devious political manœuvring. He had openly quarrelled with him over Olmütz, and he had not concealed his disgust at the humiliating part which Prussia had been compelled to play in the Crimean War. Now as Regent he appeared to favour moderate Liberalism, and therein again he contrasted strongly with his brother's marked leanings towards reactionary measures.

His private character also was above reproach, and already he had given many proofs of that instinct of fidelity to duty which led him, during the many years of sovereignty that awaited him, to subordinate personal interests of every kind to the public good. It was recalled to his praise how as a youth, yielding to the stern code of his dynasty, he had made the hardest sacrifice of personal inclinations within human power by sacrificing love to duty. It was when for reasons of State he broke off a warm attachment to the beautiful and gifted Princess Elisa Radziwill, and espoused the daughter of a reigning Prince (Princess Augusta of Weimar), in deference to the will of calculating Ministers and cold-blooded jurisconsults.

The new Regent did not lack for advisers in his early days, though

later one only was to suffice. Soon after his appointment the King of Saxony waited upon him and told him frankly that all the German Princes were apprehensive that Prussia wanted to absorb their territories. The Prince vigorously repudiated the idea, but his visitor was not reassured when, pointing to the position of Hanover upon the map of Germany, he proceeded to declare that in no circumstances would he tolerate the growth of a strong State in the middle of his Prussian provinces.

The liberal-minded Duke Ernest of Coburg did his best at that time to win him, and Prussia under his guidance, for progressive ways. As "a German prince and a plain German citizen," he addressed to the new ruler a statesmanlike appeal in which he urged him to throw over the feudal reactionaries, and unite the progressive political, military, and intellectual forces of the nation in a moderate party, so increasing the influence of Prussia and enabling it to make "a moral conquest" of Germany. " Prussia stands at the parting of the ways," he said; "what if Prussia should hold back and the feudal party should again acquire governmental influence?" He warned the Regent that if the hopes of the middle party were disappointed there was a certain prospect of its dissolution, with the result that the right wing would strengthen the party of reaction and the left make common cause with the subversive elements in society, leaving a weak and ineffective remnant incapable of exerting any active influence on public affairs. By setting herself at the head of the progressive forces, he said, Prussia might assert for herself an honourable "moral ascendancy" in Germany, but failing such an ascendancy she would be able to count only on "military and diplomatic conquests," and that at the cost of great moral and material sacrifice. Few more remarkable political prophecies are on record.

The regency began well, and once more there seemed the promise of spring-time in Germany. The Regent's first act of government was to dismiss the Manteuffel Ministry, whose conduct in the Olmütz affair and later during the Crimean War he had neither forgotten nor forgiven. Invited to resign, Manteuffel demurred, out of a misplaced concern for the welfare of the country, whereupon the Regent put in his place Prince Karl Anton von Hohenzollern, a man of Liberal leanings, who gathered round him a Cabinet of congenial colleagues, which went down to history as the "Ministry of the New Era." Of the

old men, von der Heydt (Finance) and Simons remained, while the new men included Schleinitz (Foreign Affairs), Bonin (War), Schwerin (Interior), Pückler, Patow, Auerswald, Flotwell, and Bethmann-Hollweg – for the most part Old Liberals. Lively hopes were excited in progressive circles by the Prince's first official address to the new Ministry. " Prussia," he said, appropriating the words of the Duke of Coburg, "must make moral conquests in Germany by adopting wise legislation, by cultivating all the moral elements in the nation, and by utilizing the influences which make for unity, like the Customs Union. The world must know that Prussia is everywhere prepared to protect the right." The words were vague, but the sentiment was excellent; Parliament was pleased; the Liberals believed that a turn in political events was at hand; and the nation at large brought to the Regent an almost unquestioning confidence. This was seen in the general elections which immediately followed. As the reactionaries had been put out of office, there was no electoral manœuvring, and the nation was able to make a free and unfettered use of its rights. The result was the return in January of an overwhelmingly Liberal Lower House. In many constituencies the Liberals refrained from putting forward candidates of their own, and accepted the Ministerial nominees as Liberal enough. To the joy of the nation at large, a genuinely progressive spirit appeared to assert itself in administration; greater liberty was allowed to the Press, and the law of association was relaxed.

There was no immediate visible change in the Government's foreign policy. Like the displaced King, the Regent was warmly attached to the Austrian reigning house, yet without any trace of his fantastic conception of the Empire and Emperor as sacrosanct institutions. Certainly he was not disposed to allow Prussia to be ignored, and he was not a man upon whom a Schwarzenberg would have tried to impose a second Olmütz.

It cannot be said that upon the question of national unity he held very decided opinions at that time. He was convinced that Prussia was "destined to be the head of Germany," but that destiny he was not anxious to accelerate. He was sure that German unity was not intended to come by a Frankfort Parliament or be thrown up like sea-wrack by some wave of constitutional reform. "He who would rule Germany must first conquer it," he wrote in 1849, and because Prussia

had failed ignominiously in her encounter with Austria in the Hessian constitutional conflict of 1850, he believed that the question of Prussian hegemony had been put back indefinitely. “There was a general feeling,” he wrote in 1851, in reference to this episode, “that the moment had come for Prussia to assert the position which history designed for her. But it was not to be. I see no immediate prospect of it; it must have been premature, and I believe that *we* shall not see Prussia take the position we wish for her.”

Circumstances had changed for Prussia since then, for a Bismarck had come into the foreground of her political life, and with him a new impulse had been given to her statecraft, yet unity seemed no nearer. Visiting Prussia for the coronation at Königsberg on October 18, 1861, Lord Clarendon wrote home to Earl Russell: “The King of Prussia has before him one of the most glorious enterprises monarch ever undertook. If he had a little more of his ancestor Frederick (the Great) and less of his brother Frederick William, he would be at the head of Germany in two years.” But the new King was in no hurry to be at the head of Germany. Accepting Prussian hegemony as inevitable and right, he yet looked forward to it without any lively satisfaction. So late as January, 1863, he wrote to the British ambassador to Berlin, Sir Andrew Buchanan, that he had no “expectation of living to see the consolidation of Germany, but he hoped that his son or grandson would do so.” To the last year of his life he remained in spirit and sympathy far more a Prussian than a German Sovereign.

In the second year of the regency he made the acquaintance of Louis Napoleon at the Emperor’s urgent request. Napoleon wanted Prussia as an ally, and had already frankly avowed it to Bismarck when that rising diplomatist was despatched to Paris in March, 1857, in order to sound the Emperor as to his willingness to allow the King’s troops, in case of need, to pass through French territory on their way to the Swiss province of Prussia. That suggestion had not been received in an unfriendly spirit, though in the event it had not been pressed, owing to the peaceful adjustment of the Neuchâtel dispute. Two years before this Bismarck had casually met Napoleon, who had assured him in general phrases of his good feelings towards Prussia, and of his wish for intimate relations with her.

Now the two men, thrown into closer contact, formally took each other’s measure. Of Bismarck the Emperor said: “*Ce n’est pas un homme*

sérieux," and lived to regret his want of insight. "People exaggerate his intellect, but underrate his heart," was Bismarck's truer verdict upon the restless schemer, who, as we have seen, was already hatching plots for the aggrandizement of France at the expense of her neighbours, and the discovery of the sources of Napoleon's weakness and strength furnished him with a cue which helped him to many successes and saved him from many mistakes in his later dealings with the Emperor. In sundry conversations Napoleon discussed with the Prussian envoy the probable effects of the cession to France of German territory on the left bank of the Rhine, disclaiming indeed, any large expectations of the kind, yet suggesting that "*une petite rectification des frontières*" might at some date be desirable and prove feasible, and for the rest letting it be understood that if he needed more space he would look to the Italian possessions of Austria. In order that Prussia should have an interest in any territorial arrangements in France's favour he suggested that she might find compensation in the annexation of Hanover and the Elbe Duchies, the occupation of which would enable her to become a strong maritime Power, and to assist in destroying Great Britain's oppressive mastery of the sea.

These overtures were purely informal, and were made more or less speculatively, *pour tâter le terrain*, yet behind them was a serious desire to co-operate with Prussia to mutual advantage. "Why should we not be friends?" he asked. "Let us forget the past. Statesmen must occupy themselves with the future." Perhaps because there was more intellect than heart in this sentiment, Bismarck professed to be attracted by it, and he repeatedly came back to the idea of a Franco-Prussian *entente* as an alternative, or a complement, to one with Russia. He had no wish at that time for a formal alliance with France, but he was determined to live on good terms with her, not for friendship's sake, but in order to convince other countries that Prussia counted amongst the forces of Europe, and that she did not stand alone. He was even eager to see the King and the Emperor on visiting terms, and was then doing his best to dispel the disfavour from which Napoleon, as the crowned representative of a revolutionary democracy, suffered in Ministerial and still more in Court circles in Berlin.

Perhaps at a formal alliance he would not have stopped short had it been certain that Prussia's interests would have been served by it. In

a long correspondence on the subject with his friend General Ludwig von Gerlach at that time he scoffed when that unbending royalist professed horror at the thought of such a compact between legitimacy and revolution. For who, then, he asked, were legitimate; how far back must the clean record go? Were not half the Sovereigns of Europe – of Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Holland, Greece, Sweden, England – of revolutionary origin; were not three of the Kings of Germany created by the uncle of this same Napoleon? Confessing his frankly opportunist standpoint, he wrote (May 2, 1857): " France counts for me, without regard to the person at her head for the time being, merely as a piece, though a necessary one, in the game of political chess – a game in which I am called upon to serve only my own King and my own country. In the foreign service of my country I cannot reconcile with my sense of duty, either in myself or others, sympathies and antipathies with regard to foreign Powers and persons."

The Prince Regent did not welcome the meeting with the Emperor, but he could not politely evade it. In order, however, to banish possible suspicion from the minds of the German Princes, he invited the four Kings, the Grand Dukes of Baden and Hesse, and several of the Dukes to be present. The meeting took place at Baden-Baden on June 16, 1860. After Napoleon had conferred with the minor Sovereigns, he met the Prince of Prussia alone. It was an embarrassing interview, marked by eagerness on one side and diffidence on the other. Describing it later, Napoleon said that the Prince Regent's attitude towards him was that of "*une jeune fille pudique qui craint les propos d'un vert galant et qui évite de se trouver longtemps avec lui*," and this was, in fact, just the position. Napoleon assured the Regent that he had sought the interview for the purpose of assuring him that his sentiments towards Prussia and Germany were entirely friendly. Nevertheless, he suggested the cession to France of German territory, promising that if the Regent would further it he would approve of a suitable addition to Prussia in return. The Regent, as he told Bismarck later, neither assented nor refused, and probably allowed Napoleon to think that he had open mind on the subject, though the matter was not pursued further at the time.

Before the federal Princes departed from Baden the Prince Regent made an earnest attempt to convince them of Prussia's loyalty, and to

remove apprehension. He assured them (June 18th) that it was his wish and hope to arrive at un understanding with Austria, and added: "I consider it to be the first task of the German as of the European policy of Prussia to safeguard not only the territorial integrity of the common fatherland but that also of the individual Sovereigns." The assurance does not appear to have carried conviction to every mind. In a conversation with the Prince on the following day' the King of Bavaria, who had least to fear from Prussia, voiced the existing incertitude, and to his direct questions received equally candid answers. The Regent warmly defended himself against suspicions of reactionary intentions. "Having found a constitution in existence," he said, "I consider it my duty to conform to it and not to falsify it with unnatural interpretations." Questioned as to his opinion of the chances of the States again working together, he said: " Austria must cease to treat Prussia as a *parvenu*, and must recognize her as a Great Power and an equal."

From Baden the assembled Princess took away a clearer conviction than before that there was no longer a puppet on the throne of Prussia and that the Regent was a force to be reckoned with. Napoleon had said in his conversation with the Regent: "*L'Autriche est bien malade*." The dictum of the great man was buzzed amongst the Sovereigns and their Ministers, and it created alarm. Some of the secondary States began to fear for their fate if Austria, after all, were to prove a broken reed. At that time Bavaria in particular still looked as before to Vienna, while Würtemberg had renewed her old attachment to France and the Napoleonic line: only Baden of the larger States was genuinely friendly to Prussia. It was in the month following the Baden colloquies that the Regent met the Austrian Emperor at Teplitz (July 25th). Francis Joseph had also called to his side a new adviser. Count Rechberg-Rothenlöwen had succeeded Count Buol as Foreign Minister (May, 1859), and the appointment seemed a good omen. Rechberg had hitherto been President of the Diet at Frankfort, where he and Bismarck had been on excellent terms. A grateful and faithful disciple of Metternich, of whose autocratic spirit a portion had fallen to him, he had a reputation for impetuosity but also for unvarying fairness. While convinced of Austria's unassailable strength, and determined to repel any challenge of her position in Germany, he was not merely averse to a breach with Prussia, but heartily wished for the

continuance of the existing dualism, though on the old basis. Rechberg remained in office when in the following year (December, 1860) Schmerling became head of the Cabinet.

The Teplitz meeting was marked by warm protestations of friendship on both sides, but as soon as conversation entered political channels agreement was less reserved. The Prince Regent had carefully thought out a scheme of concessions and counter-concessions, Prussia offering to Austria an alliance under which her existing possessions, including Venetia, were to be guaranteed, while in return the presidency of the Federation was to be exercised by the two States alternately, and in future wars Prussia was to command the armies of the North and Austria only those of the South. Proposals to this effect were made, but while the Emperor welcomed the idea of an alliance he was in no mind to renounce any of his prerogatives as head of the Federation, and upon the general question of federal reform no advance was made. The Regent wrote to Prince Albert, with whom he carried on at this time a busy exchange of views, that the meeting led to no written or even verbal engagement of any kind, but only to "a thorough discussion and communication of ideas." It was clear, however, that in all he said the Emperor had assumed that Austria was still undisputed mistress in Germany and intended so to remain.

Before a year had passed Napoleon's visit was returned at Compiègne (0ctober, 1861). "Diplomacy is listening attentively," Prince Albert wrote just before the meeting took place. It listened, but heard nothing, for there was nothing to hear. More than before Napoleon tried to draw near to the Prussian ruler – the Regent had become King in January – but he met with no encouragement. Yet no unpleasant or inopportune questions appear to have been raised, and the King, who went to France with uneasy forebodings, returned home with relief. German unity had a warm friend in England at this time in the Prince Consort, who watched the slow progress of events with the deep concern of a German Prince of strong Liberal sentiments who united to enthusiasm for the national cause a firm conviction that Prussia was its only hope. He saw, however, that in order to justify herself to Germany it was necessary that Prussia should identify herself with the wider nationalism, sink her own interests in those of the whole nation, pursue a bold and consistent German, and no longer

a merely Prussian, policy, and above all give proof of belief in Liberal principles and of a determination to apply them.

For like his brother, Duke Ernest of Coburg, he believed in the old democratic principle of "Unity through liberty." "It is not," he wrote, "a Cavour that Germany needs, but a Stein." In a letter dated March 12, 1861, the Prince appealed to the King, with a confidence which may have been exaggerated, consciously or unconsciously, by his desire to influence him at a turning-point in national history, to take occasion by the hand, and lead Germany into the land of promise. "My hope," he wrote, "like that of most German patriots, rests upon Prussia – rests upon you. It rests upon Prussia, which has only to manipulate her constitution skilfully in order to find within herself all the means of satisfying the requirements of the time – of serving as a model for the other countries of Germany – and of ingratiating the sympathies of those countries in such a way that they must desire the direct connection with the Prussian system. It rests upon you because you have succeeded to the throne without being entangled or fettered by the miserable policy of reaction, to which, indeed, you were often yourself a victim, and because your known loyalty of character makes you regarded by the Germans as the type of their oldest saying, '*Ein Wort ein Mann*!' ('A man of his word'). . . . Let no one succeed in shaking your confidence in your own people and in the German nation!"

" Prussia," he wrote two months later, "must first be morally master in Germany before she can lift up her head in Europe, and this she will become not by sudden resolutions, not by wild, impulsive yearnings, not by urging claims diplomatically, but by a slow, well-thought-out, persistent, courageous, truly German, thoroughly Liberal policy – a policy which meets the requirements of the age and of the German nation, and makes it impossible for the individual Governments to act otherwise than in the same spirit with it and upon the same principles."

The words deserve to be recalled not merely because of the insight, the clearness and sanity of judgment to which they bear witness, but as marking the antithesis of the policy which was soon afterwards adopted in Prussia, and so gave direction to the entire course of Germany's later political development.

THE PRUSSIAN CONSTITUTIONAL CONFLICT, 1858-1863

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WHILE THE FEDERAL CONTROVERSY still dragged on, there occurred in Prussia a constitutional struggle which for a time threw a shadow upon other domestic questions. Long before he became Regent the Prince of Prussia, a soldier by instinct and training, had been impressed by the need for a stronger and more efficient army and for a reform of the existing military organization. With true insight he had recognized that in the altered conditions of military science and *technique* the day of the old militia was over, and that Prussia's position would be strengthened and her capacity to meet future tasks be assured, only to the extent that she had at command a sufficient force of highly trained and highly disciplined men. He had seen with increasing anxiety the growing military strength of France, Russia, and even of Austria, and he feared that in the event of a clash with either of these Powers before Prussia had had time to adjust her military system to the altered situation the result might be disastrous. The memories of Olmütz and all the other humiliations which there found their climax were a constant warning that Prussia would never be able to assert her rightful position in Germany and Europe until she could depend altogether upon her own strong arm. Military defects which had come to his knowledge when engaged, as Prince of Prussia, in quelling the Baden insurrection of 1849 and the slowness of the mobilization of his forces in 1859, when Austria was eagerly waiting for Prussian help, had also convinced him that radical reforms in organization were necessary if the army was to become an absolutely reliable weapon in serious warfare.

His first act as Regent, therefore, had been to replace the stagnant Ministry of Manteuffel, which had neglected the army, by a Cabinet of more progressive men. In his first address to the new Ministry he had hinted at an early scheme of army re form. "The army which created Prussia's greatness," he said, "was reformed at the time of the War of Liberation, but forty years' experience has shown the need of great changes. For these not only quiet political conditions but much money is necessary, for it would be a political blunder, which would entail a severe retribution, were we to be satisfied with a cheap military administration, which failed to meet expectations at the critical moment. Prussia's army must be strong and imposing, in order that it may be able, if necessary, to throw a heavy political weight into the scale."

The Prussian army at that time was still organized on the *Landwehr* basis introduced by Scharnhorst early in the century. The collapse of Prussia under Napoleon's onslaught had proved the insufficiency of the standing army and its Frederician traditions. After the defeat of Jena the nation rose *en masse* at the King's call, and it was this national army which retrieved Prussia's fortunes and turned humiliation into victory. The unity of the army with the nation, in spirit as well as person, was no mere phrase in those days: then as never before or since the army represented the organized national spirit and will. At a public dinner in Berlin in 1814, Blücher could propose a toast "To the happy union of the military and the civilian class by means of the *Landwehr*."

During the War of Liberation the manhood of the nation has been under arms, and the principle of universal military service was confirmed by a law of September 3, 1814. Nominally the period of service with the colours was three years, reducible to one year in the case of those who attained a certain educational standard and maintained themselves while serving, though in fact two years with the colours had become the general practice with the whole of the rank and file. Two years in the reserve of the line followed, after which came seven years in the first ban, followed by an equal term in the second ban, of the *Landwehr*. In war-time the line regiments and the first ban of the *Landwehr* were mobilized for field service and the second ban was available for manning the garrisons and fortresses. Substantially this was the arrangement which had continued since. The changes now proposed related mainly to the annual levy of recruits and to the position of the *Landwehr* in the army system. When the existing basis of the army's organization was laid down in 1820, 40,000 men were called up yearly on a population of eleven millions. In 1859 the levy continued about the same, though the number actually liable to be called up, on a population of eighteen millions, was 63,000. As the first ban of the *Landwehr* consisted of men between the ages of 25 and 32 years, it was found that on mobilization more than half of the field army consisted of heads of households, while a large part of the unmarried men of military age remained at home.

The measures upon which the Regent had set his mind were intended to apply upon broader and most efficient principles the constitutional obligation of military service, by increasing the annual

levy to 63,000, enabling him to create forty-nine new regiments – thirty-nine of infantry and ten of cavalry, by making three instead of two years' service with the colours the fixed rule, by reducing to a minimum the excessive exemptions, by increasing to four years the period of service with the first reserve and curtailing that with the *Landwehr*, and, finally, by improving the entire system of training in the case both of officers and men. A larger part of the young manhood of the nation was thus to be brought under arms, and more of the older men were to be passed into the last reserve. Thus be aimed at creating a larger, a more vigorous, and a more efficient force. Hitherto the field army had numbered about 200,000 and the reserves 400,000; now the former was to number 371,000 and the latter 289,000, a change implying no great difference in numbers, but a vast difference in effective fighting strength. The annual cost of the reorganization scheme was estimated at nine and a half million thalers, or nearly a million and a half pounds sterling.

In deciding to introduce these reforms the Regent had the energetic support of General Edwin von Manteuffel, chief of the Military Cabinet, General Helmuth von Moltke, since 1858 head of the General Staff and a man in whom, as a strategist and organizer, he had already begun to place great confidence; and above all, of General Albrecht Theodor von Roon, who had suggested the main principles in a memorandum written just before the regency took effect. At the last moment Bonin, the Minister of War, became convinced that the proposals as they stood had no chance of success, and with the idea of making the scheme more acceptable, he recommended that the war strength of the battalions should be reduced by one-quarter, that part of the men should be released from service in the winter, and that the older men of the *Landwehr* should be ex empted from liability to yearly training. The Regent rejected these recommendations point-blank, whereupon (December 5, 1859) Bonin, drawing a right conclusion from his rebuff, resigned and made place for Roon.

In the speech from the throne with which the Diet was opened on January 12, 1860, the Regent announced the intended introduction of an army reform bill, and in view of the widespread controversy, endeavoured to allay alarm as to its objects.

"Recent decades," he said, "have revealed the nation's readiness for sacrifice and its martial spirit, but they have also brought to light

grave defects in the military system, and the removal of these is my duty and my right. It is not my intention to break with the traditions of a great era; the Prussian army will remain in the future what it was in the past – the nation in arms. Give, then, to the proposals, which have been maturely weighed, and which pay equal regard to civil and military interests, your unprejudiced examination and your assent. Such assent will in every direction give evidence of the country's confidence in my honest intentions. No measure of equal importance for the protection, greatness, and power of the fatherland has been laid before the national legislature."

On February 10th the bill was introduced, together with a bill for abolishing the exemption of the knights' fees from the land tax, by which measure a large part of the cost was to be met. At that time the Lower House of the Diet was as strongly Liberal in constitution as the Upper House was Conservative, yet it had hitherto been friendly and even compliant to the Government, and had assented, albeit grudgingly, to certain military changes of a minor order. Now it was thought to be high time to make a firm stand. Manteuffel said at the time, "If the Liberals are wise now, they are sure of remaining in power for many years." Whether or not it would have been prudent to accept the military reforms at once, before they became involved in a dispute over constitutional rights and doctrines, may be an open question. It is certain that its attitude during the subsequent "conflict" committed Prussian Liberalism to a weary sojourn in the wilderness, which at the end of forty years was still unfinished.

In the country at large the scheme was not received with favour. The principal objections were directed against the proposal to dethrone the *Landwehr* from the important position which it had hitherto held, a feature of the scheme regarding which even military opinion was acutely divided. There was also a strong party which believed that two years' service with the colours was sufficient under modern conditions, and that the Government should be willing to concede that point if given its way in other matters. The industrial and commercial classes in particular objected that the longer term of service would prove a serious handicap to Prussia's further economical development, which had of late years made marked progress. The economists deplored the increase of the army estimates, regarding as inordinate the addition of a million and a half pounds to the relatively

small budget which satisfied the national demands of that day. Finally, Liberal and democratic politicians disliked the scheme from a fear that with the increase of the military power of the Crown the forces of reaction would be strengthened.

The army reform bill was duly referred to Committee, and from the first it was apparent that there was no hope of its acceptance by the Diet. Major-General Stavenhagen, a retired officer, Liberal in politics but conservative in military notions, proposed amendments calling for the retention of the *Landwehr* as part of the line and the reduction of the term of service for the infantry to two years, changes which would have meant either a saving of money or an increase in the number of trained men, and these amendments were carried by large majorities in spite of Ministerial protest. The Government, foreseeing that the Lower House would uphold the vote of the Committee, now looked around for a way of carrying its scheme without the necessity of obtaining parliamentary sanction, thus evading the risk of negative votes. Was a new law necessary at all? The essential principles of army organization were laid down in the law of 1814. At the time that law was passed the King was absolute, but though a constitution had been granted in the meantime, it did not alter the King's unlimited control over military administration. It followed, so the Government's legal advisers contended, that every vital part of the scheme of reform might be carried out without new legislation. The raising of the necessary money did, indeed, create a difficulty, but perhaps the Diet would be willing to recognize accomplished facts and pay the bill when tendered.

Accordingly, the Government separated the administrative from the financial side of the scheme, and in May invited the Diet to vote nine million thalers for the adoption of such measures, conducive to greater military efficiency, as might be practicable in virtue of laws already in force. The Minister of Finance spoke of the vote as provisional, and let it be understood that in granting it the Diet would not be prejudging the complete scheme as presented before. In this belief the Lower House agreed to vote, for one year only, the sum asked for. The Upper Chamber, less responsible in composition and uncompromisingly Ministerial in sentiment, set every consideration of prudence at defiance, and incontinently plunged with blundering tread into the dangerous quicksands of constitutional conflict,

dragging the Government after it. It objected to any reduction of the original estimates, urged the Minister of War not to modify his proposals, and affirmed its willingness to vote whatever sum of money might be needed. Fortified by this encouragement, and disregarding the fact that the grant sanctioned by the Lower House was limited to a single year, the Government proceeded to put into effect the full scheme, and accordingly the new regiments were embodied and the new officers received their commissions.

On the death of Frederick William IV on January 2, 1861, the Regent succeeded him as William I, and the first Diet of the new reign met on January 14th. In his speech from the throne the King reminded the Diet that if great expectations were built on Prussia's foreign policy, it must be prepared to make the sacrifices necessary to the due strengthening of the army. A violent quarrel between the Government and the Lower Chamber began at once. Even now the Chamber did not object to the new regiments, and it voted an addition to the army estimates for another year, but it demanded a reduction of the term of service and the retention of the *Landwehr* on its old basis, and above all it insisted that the Government must embody all its proposals in the budget and accept the decision of the Diet upon them as a whole.

Strong feeling was excited in the country, and, recalling the late hard struggle for constitutional liberties, the nation threw itself into renewed vehement controversy. A suggestion of the changed temper of public opinion was shown by two by-elections which took place in the autumn, for in them constituencies which in 1858 had rejected democratic candidates now returned staunch leaders of the popular cause – Benedict Waldeck and Hermann Schulze-Delitsch, the former a well-known member of the Frankfort Parliament. Everywhere the democrats joined hands as in the political conflicts of ten and twelve years before, and the result was the formation of a new party which was intended not only to voice the opposition to the Government's scheme but to do battle with autocracy in every form. This was the party of *Fortschritt* or Progress, among whose earlier leaders were, besides Waldeck and Schulze, Theodor Mommsen and Franz Duncker, the historians, Rudolf Virchow, the bacteriologist, Johann Jacoby, Hans Victor von Unruh, and Max von Forckenbeck. By combining opposition to the army scheme, of which it honestly doubted the necessity, with the advocacy of the deferred political aspirations of the

middle and working classes, the Progressist party sprang at once into favour with the nation, which was ready and waiting for a strong democratic lead.

It seemed that the new King was about to expose himself to a distrust and resentment almost as deep and widespread as had been aroused in the revolutionary days of March, 1848, and the unpopularity which he incurred in his own monarchy became magnified in the eyes of the other German peoples. At this conjuncture an event occurred which called the nation back to the impersonal aspects of the dispute. Thrice during his reign William I narrowly escaped the hand of the assassin, and on each occasion the crime synchronized with legislative measures which roused strong public prejudice and passion. The first attempt on his life was made at the outset of the constitutional conflict by a fanatical student of Leipzig named Becker, who waylaid him at Baden-Baden (July 14, 1861), and fired two shots at him, without serious effects. His escape evoked a warm outburst of loyalty, which showed that the nation's unflinching defence of its constitutional rights, as it understood them, implied no hostility to the ruler. New elections in December added to the Government's discomfiture, however, for they showed the broad mass of the people to be solidly behind the constitutional party. Although the King had directed the Cabinet to use all possible influence, short of intimidation, to secure the return of a more pliant Lower House, the Conservatives were reduced to an impotent body of twenty-four.

No sooner did the Lower House meet (January 14, 1862) than the struggle entered a new and more definite phase. The irreconcilable democrats had overborne the moderate Liberals, who would have preferred concession and compromise to conflict, and now they abandoned defensive for offensive tactics. Refusing to accept the army estimates as presented, on the ground that the classification of expenditure was too summary, they proposed a resolution calling upon the Government to give full details, instead of asking the Diet to vote money in the dark, yet also, as before, demanding the reduction of the period of service to two years. This challenge the Government interpreted as an attempt to invade one of the most important of the Crown's prerogatives, its sole right to determine army administration and to direct the executive. The resolution was carried, though not by

a large majority, and the Government answered by dissolving the Diet (March 11th). Both sides now knew that they were committed to a war to the knife.

In the meantime the Cabinet, though still united as to the necessity of the military proposals, had become divided as to the method of realizing them. Before the elections took place the three Conservative Ministers, von der Heydt, Roon, and Bernstorff, presented a memorial to the King urging that the Government should "utilize all legal means at their disposal to exercise a legitimate influence" on the result, such as the issue of instructions to the Chief Presidents, District Presidents, and Landrats regarding the candidates whom they were to support. They wanted "a Liberal administration on Conservative lines," and urged that the army reorganization scheme should still be adhered to, but with a reduction of the estimates, if that were possible.

The Liberal Ministers issued a counter-memorandum, endorsing likewise the reorganization of the army, with retrenchment in the military estimates, but recommending the presentation of the budget in detail. The King adopted the programme of the Conservative section of the Cabinet and also accepted the proposal to influence the elections subject to the stipulation "without applying any measure of intimidation." The result was that the more Liberal Ministers, Auerswald, Schwerin, Patow, Bernuth (who had succeeded Simons), and Pückler, resigned, and men in fuller sympathy with the military scheme – Itzenplitz, Lippe, Holzbrink, Mühler, Jagow, and Prince Adolf von Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen, took their places, the last-named succeeding as head of the Cabinet. Nevertheless, the elections in May resulted in the return of a Lower House more hostile to Government than before. The parties of the majority numbered 285, and opposed to them was a fragile coalition of 67; in a House of more than 352 members there were now only twelve Conservatives. In the hope of conciliating the more moderate section of the Opposition, the Government agreed to specialize the budget, as had been demanded. This concession, however, did not satisfy the majority, who claimed that the whole scheme must be submitted to the unconditional decision of the Chamber. As the Government refused to surrender, the House declared the organization proposals to be unconstitutional, and by a vote of 273 against 62 struck out of the budget all the votes required on their behalf, disregarding the warning of the Finance

Minister that by so doing it might "bring about a condition in which something might happen that was not expressly provided for by the constitution" – a veiled threat of which the meaning was unmistakable.

Nevertheless, the Ministry as a whole appears to have had no idea at this time of defying or even contesting the budget. right of the Diet. Early in September eight members, including Roon and Bernstorff, warned the King that this decision should be accepted and the Diet be again dissolved, "because the Ministry would be violating the constitution if it usurped the right to spend the country's money against the expressed vote of its representatives and without a legalized budget." Already, however, the King had decided to govern without a budget if he could not have his way with one, and on learning that this was his intention, Bernstorff resigned, and obtained leave to return to the London embassy, heartily glad to be out of the quarrel. At the King's invitation four other dissentient Ministers, all moderate Conservatives, also resigned.

In the struggle which followed, the King, the Government, and the Upper House, almost solidly Conservative, were ranged on one side, challenging a literal interpretation of an ambiguous constitutional doctrine, barely twelve years old; while on the other side was the popular assembly, strong in unity and resolution and in the consciousness that behind it was the overwhelming voice of the nation.

A deadlock having again been reached, the sittings of the Diet were adjourned. Convinced now that if headway was to be made against an opposition which hitherto had proved intractable stronger measures would be needed, and that for stronger measures he must look to stronger men, the King now turned to the rising hope of Prussian diplomacy, Herr von Bismarck. Barely four months before this (May 22nd), Bismarck had been translated from the St. Petersburg embassy to that of Paris, where he had since been chafing under a feeling of uselessness and neglect.

The decision to call the notorious Brandenburg Junker was taken on the urgent advice of Roon, who had returned to the idea again and again, yet the King had serious misgivings. Bismarck had many friends at Court, who knew and appreciated his strength and firmness, but, like all strong men, he had enemies amongst the weaklings. In the

country he was unpopular by reason of his political opinions, which savoured too strongly of feudalism for a constitutional age, and it was apprehension on this account that for a time prejudiced the King against him, for almost it seemed that by summoning to his assistance so pronounced a reactionary he would needlessly add to his difficulties.

Bismarck kissed hands as a Minister on September 23rd, but it was only on October 8th – called by Duke Ernest of Coburg "a day of good-fortune in German history" – that he was formally appointed Minister President and Foreign Minister. At this juncture there was a moment when the King for the first time seriously wavered and was on the point of yielding. Bismarck has related how desperate the situation had become when the King summoned him to his palace at Potsdam in order to take office. The outlook seemed hopeless; perplexity and despondency reigned; the King, in despair, had written out his abdication, and the document lay on the table before him. If Bismarck, he said, would agree to take office, he would give place to the Crown Prince. The faithful Brandenburger reversed the offer, and agreed to take office only if the King abandoned the idea of fleeing from duty; and on that condition the compact was sealed.

The new Minister's first parliamentary act was to withdraw the budget for 1863. He was ready for peace on the King's terms, but if the Lower House did not want such a peace he was equally ready for war. The Chamber should, however, have another chance of returning to reason. Accordingly, he first tried persuasion. Speaking in the Budget Committee on September 30th, he said:

"The conflict was being taken too tragically and too tragically described by the Press. The Government sought no struggle, and if the crisis could be adjusted with honour it would gladly help. Excess of individual independence made it difficult to rule with a constitution in Prussia; in France it was different, for there individual independence was lacking. A constitutional crisis was no shame but an honour. Perhaps they in Prussia were too educated, too critical to bear a constitution."

All that was meant to be complimentary, but it was not convincing. What followed was alarming. " Germany," he added, "did not look to Prussia's Liberalism but to her power. Prussia must concentrate her power until the favourable moment – which several

times already had been allowed to pass – for her frontiers were unfavourable to a healthy body politic." Then followed a passage which from that time forward was accepted as a crystallization of Bismarck's conception of statecraft:

"The great questions of the time will be decided not by speeches and resolutions of majorities – that was the mistake of 1848 and 1849 – but by blood and iron."

The words threw the political world into perturbation, and the orator soon found that he had overturned a hornets' nest. Even the King was seriously alarmed and expostulated, nor was he reassured by his Minister's attempt to explain away the vigorous metaphor. And yet in fairness to Bismarck it should be remembered that the famous "blood and iron" sentence is usually quoted in detachment, as though it had been flung at his opponents as a defiant ultimatum. It was really part of a speech which was intended to be persuasive and conciliatory, and to afford the Lower House an opportunity of reconsidering a critical situation. "This olive branch," he had ended sentimentally, "I plucked at Avignon, in order to offer it as an emblem of peace to the popular party, but I see that it is premature." For the rest, the "blood and iron" speech was notable for other sentiments and other examples of robust utterance which plainly indicated that Prussian political life was unlikely henceforth to suffer from monotony.

However sincere his appeal for accommodation may have been, the Liberal majority had gone too far for retreat. Several years before (1858) Bismarck had criticized the self- same Diet because of its tameness and subserviency. "The disease to which our parliamentary life has succumbed," he then said, "is, besides the incapacity of the individual, the servility of the Lower House; the majority has no independent convictions; it is the tool of Ministerial omnipotence." The Lower House had east off that disease; and in an influx of new vigour it was about to show Bismarck more independence than he had bargained for. His opponents believed, and believed rightly, that if an infraction of the constitution were to be lightly tolerated at one point, the whole parliamentary system was a farce and Prussia might as well be put back to the days of 1848. They felt also that the cause of German unity was involved. One reason why Prussia's advocacy of this cause had never enlisted the hearty attachment of the more liberal

States was her political stagnation, which gave rise to the apprehension that Prussian leadership would be leadership backward. Another victory for reaction in Prussia would confirm that view, and further thwart the aspirations of the German nation. Nor, finally, was there anything in the past of the new Minister to justify confidence that the causes dear to the popular party would be safe in his keeping. They saw in him only the representative of a feudal aristocracy which had for generations maintained a greedy grasp upon political power and class privilege, the uncompromising champion of monarchy by the grace of God, the resolute anti- parliamentarian, who was prepared to fight to the utmost any extension of the concessions made to democracy by Frederick William IV. Suspicions of such a man were not to be allayed by flattering phrases and sentimental talk about olive-branches.

Bismarck's overtures were, therefore, rejected. In its sittings of October 6th and 7th the Lower House discussed a resolution of the Budget Committee calling upon the Government to submit to its decision as speedily as possible the estimates for 1863, and declaring as unconstitutional any expenditure which had been expressly rejected by a resolution of the House; and in spite of the Minister's protest that the adoption of this resolution would imply the refusal of compromise, it was approved by 251 votes against 36. On the other hand, the Upper House voted for the estimates in the form proposed by the Government, whereupon the people's chamber declared its action to be unconstitutional and therefore "null and void."

A deadlock had now occurred, and though Bismarck tried to divide the constitutional party, even offering seats in the Cabinet to one or two of the Old Liberals, he failed. Now in earnest he sharpened his knife; the knot which could not be unravelled must be cut. On October 13th, five days after his formal appointment as Minister-President and Foreign Secretary, the Diet was prorogued, with the declaration that as it had refused to vote the needed supplies it was the regrettable duty of the Government to carry on the business of the country without the formalities provided by the constitution. Nevertheless, he entertained the confident hope that sanction would be given later to such measures as might be adopted for that purpose. Before the Diet met again in January (1863) the Cabinet had been reconstituted, with Roon still at the Ministry of War, but with two new men, Baron von

Bodelschwingh and Count F. A. zu Eulenburg, holding the portfolios of Finance and the Interior respectively. Once more the majority in the Lower Chamber struck from the budget the costs of the army reorganization scheme, and when the Upper House refused to adopt the budget as amended, and restored it to its original form, the constitutionalists below, as before, declared the proceeding invalid. Bismarck, not without a fierce joy, took up the gauntlet thus thrown down. The dispute dragged on without result until May 27th, when the Diet was again prorogued.

Petitioned by the Lower House in that month to remove the Ministry, since it was no longer able to work with it harmoniously, and to abandon the system for which it stood, the King replied defiantly. “My Ministers possess my confidence,” he said; “their official actions have been done with my sanction, and I am grateful to them that they are so earnest in opposing the constitutional endeavours of the House of Deputies to extend its power.” In announcing the close of the session, Bismarck regretted that the Lower House had refused its cooperation in the work of the Government, and added that steps would be taken to give effect to the measures necessary to the country’s welfare, and he again expressed confidence that the Diet would in the end approve whatever action might be taken. The declaration was the prelude to a coup d’état not unworthy of the Elector of Hesse, for the Government proceeded to govern without a budget.

Nevertheless, not all the Conservatives viewed with approval, or even with indifference, the dangerous ways which the King and his Ministers were treading. Bernstorff and those of his colleagues who thought with him had resigned rather than identify themselves with wrong-doing and play tricks with their consciences. Even so sturdy a royalist as Lieutenant-Colonel Vincke wrote to the King on New Year’s Day of 1863: “The people are loyal to your Majesty, but tenacious also of the right which article 99 of the constitution [relating to the budget] unequivocally guarantees to them. May God in His grace avert the unhappy consequences of a great misunderstanding!”

At the beginning of June fresh fuel was added to the flames by the issue of a drastic Ordinance, faithful to the tradition of the Carlsbad Decrees, restricting the Press. The measure was not only held to be contrary to the constitution, but it was made more offensive to the

nation by being issued while the Diet was not sitting. The position of the Government was not improved when it became known that the Crown Prince Frederick, whose natural openness of mind had increasingly disposed him to Liberal ideas since his marriage with the Princess Royal of England in 1858, was warmly opposed to the Ordinance. Visiting East Prussia at the time, he was able to judge for himself, by the coolness shown to him as the King's representative, how deep was the resentment felt by the middle classes, then the backbone of the Liberal party, and at Danzig he took the unusual step of publicly criticizing the Ordinance, declaring that it had been issued without his knowledge and that he took no responsibility for it. The incident led to a warm exchange of letters between father and son, the result of which was that the Crown Prince had to promise not to interfere again in public controversy.

What the Crown Prince could not say publicly, however, he could still write, and in a letter to Bismarck (June 30th) he bitterly reproached him for "having found no other means of coming to an understanding with public opinion than by imposing silence on it. . . . And what results do you anticipate from this policy? The pacification of agitated feelings and the restoration of peace? Do you imagine that you can pacify agitated feelings by means of fresh violations of the sense of justice? You expect to be more successful in the new elections. To me, however, it appears to be contrary to human nature to hope for a change of opinions when these are constantly being aroused and irritated by the procedure of the Government. I regard those who lead the King, my father, on such a path," he added, "as the most dangerous advisers for Crown and fatherland." For two years the Crown Prince absented himself from all sittings of the Cabinet by way of protest against the course of lawlessness upon which Bismarck had entered. Queen Augusta and the Queen Dowager, the widow of Frederick William IV, were equally opposed to the despotic Minister.

Seriously disconcerted by the widespread disaffection which was caused by this subtle attempt to stifle public opinion, Bismarck deemed it prudent to bow before the storm. When the Press Ordinance was laid before the Diet, the Upper House promptly approved it, but the Lower House condemned it by a large majority, and the Government, fearing to increase the area and deepen the spirit of strife, silently repealed it later in the year.

In September the Diet was again dissolved. “I had no heart for it,” Bismarck wrote to his wife at tile time, “but there was nothing else to do, though God knows what is the good of it. Now the electoral swindle begins.” And “swindle” it was. The Government tried to handicap the Press; it removed or cashiered judges and other State officials who had voted with the Opposition in the Diet, and by the help of a pliant bureaucracy resorted to all the devices for corrupting public opinion and silencing resistance which in those days formed part of the recognized system of government. The whole duty of citizenship under the existing system of crypto-absolutism was clearly defined in a reply addressed by the King to a Parish Council in a remote part of the kingdom whose members had asked how they were expected to vote in the election. “An attitude hostile to my Government,” he told them, “is incompatible with fidelity to my person, for my Ministers have been called to their offices in virtue of my confidence and have to support me in the discharge of my great and serious duties.” It was all to no purpose; in the new Lower House there was a larger Opposition than before, the Progressists and democrats alone numbering 143. The Diet was, however, a formality in those days. For nearly four years the King and his Cabinet carried on the financial business of the country without its co-operation. The Diet met, discussed, criticized, and legislated, but it was not allowed to exercise itself over money bills.

It is only possible to be just to the disputants in this historical struggle if their different points of view are kept in mind. Looking back upon it the German politician of to-day, lacking the intense earnestness which made the greatness of the heroic age to which the struggle fell, is apt to judge it as merely an academic controversy over barren theories, carried, owing to sheer obstinacy on both sides, to the point of irrational exasperation. From first to last, of course, the struggle was fought over constitutional theories, but these theories were unmistakable realities to their adherents. The tragedy of the episode lay in the fact that the combatants were all the time disputing about different things; the Liberals arguing on the principles of constitutionalism in general, while the Government vainly endeavoured to bring them back to the fact that the point at issue was the interpretation of the constitution of Prussia only, a State in which democratic and parliamentary government had never existed. It was a

fundamental error of the popular party that, following too readily the guidance of the jurisconsult Gneist, whose mind was saturated with English constitutional law, it ever kept in mind English conditions, and argued from English constitutional principles and premises, forgetting that these principles and premises did not rightly apply. The secret of the trouble, therefore, was less that the disputants were viewing a controversial question from different standpoints, and therefore in different aspects, than that they were contending for different constitutional theories, so that, lacking a common ground of argument, agreement was impossible.

For the constitution of Prussia did not then, and does not to-day, give to the popular assembly absolute control over finance. Under it a budget or a money bill requires the assent of the Crown and the Upper Chamber just as necessarily as that of the Lower House, whose legislative competence is no larger than that of either of the other two factors. The claim of the Lower House to omnipotence in finance, in virtue of its *liberum veto*, was therefore denied by the very law to which appeal was made, and when his opponents threw at him their English-made theories and precedents Bismarck answered with perfect justification, "In Prussia only that is constitutional which rests on the Prussian constitution," and the very basis of that constitution was the equal power of the Crown, the first and the second Chamber in legislation. "Alter this equality to the prejudice of the Crown," he said with complete truth, "withdraw from this general rule the legislation relative to taxation, its collection and expenditure, and you destroy the independence of the Crown in favour of majorities." When they attacked him as a reactionary and compared him to Strafford, he replied that every such reproach was in effect aimed at the person of the King, whose servant he was and whose will he was executing; and that inasmuch as upon this question the King had exactly as much legislative power as either chamber of the Diet – in effect twice as much as the Lower Chamber, since the Upper House was altogether on his side – the deputies were really the unconstitutional party, for they were endeavouring to read into the constitution a claim which was neither written nor implied therein.

It was in vain that Gneist charged Bismarck with raising again the banner of absolutism, assured him that "the country would not rest until it had been thrown down," and vehemently declared that the

budget which, though not approved, was to be enforced, “bore the mark of Cain upon its face.” The Minister rejoined with unruffled temper: “Whatever rights the constitution accords to you shall be conceded without curtailment, but whatever you demand beyond that we shall refuse.”

Perhaps the theory of the Government was hardly less one-sided. It was that, while the Diet had a perfect right to approve expenditure, it was not justified in refusing its approval. Such a claim meant, in effect, that it was the Government’s right to ask for money and the Diet’s duty to give it. That claim, too, was arbitrary and was unsupported by the letter of the constitution, yet it was held to be a logical deduction from the omission of the constitution to provide for the situation which would arise when a budget could not become law because the three legislative factors were unable to agree upon it. Bismarck himself had foreseen and had tried to forestall this impasse when the constitution was being drafted, and now it had arrived. In countries under party government such a situation merely caused the inconvenience of a change of Ministry; in Prussia, where the Government remained in spite of parliamentary opposition and votes of no-confidence, the result was a deadlock.

What, then, was the reasonable solution of the difficulty? The question was one of greater importance for the popular party than for the royalists, whose leaders were either fighting, like Bismarck, for the prerogatives of the Crown, or, like Roon and Moltke, for the efficiency of the army, and in either case cared little or nothing for the rights of parliament. Bismarck advised compromise in a speech memorable because it contained the germ of the doctrine, attributed to him ever afterwards, against his protests, that questions of right are questions of might. “If compromise,” he said (January, 1863), “fails owing to one of the parties concerned seeking to carry out its own views with doctrinaire finality, compromise gives place to conflicts, and – since the life of the State cannot stand still – these conflicts become questions of power. Whoever has power at command will go forward in his own way.”

For the democrats compromise upon a principle so sacred as that for which they were contending would have seemed treachery against conviction and honour, and the fight continued. It is not necessary to follow the future course of the struggle, for it developed no new

aspects. The relationships between Governments and Opposition parties are seldom for a long time cordial in German parliaments, whose organization, business, and procedure remind the deputies at every turn that their function is the nominal one of discussing – if they are so disposed – and passing Cabinet measures. During these four years of budgetless administration the Lower Chamber showed greater boldness in challenging this theory of legislation than it had shown in the early days of constitutional government, when Crown and parliament were settling down into their working relationships; and it might appear to have exhausted itself in the effort, for there has never been a prolonged repetition of the same independence since. Of the principal combatants on the Ministerial side probably Bismarck and his colleagues Roon and Moltke derived most satisfaction from the conflict. To the King it was a source of distress and anxiety. Bismarck often related in after years that he had periodical fits of nervousness during the struggle and that he was throughout haunted by the thought of Charles I's untimely end. That the King, who was no coward, was really as apprehensive as this over a dispute which never transgressed polemical channels may well be doubted; and in particular the picture which he is said to have drawn of himself suspended from one gibbet and his Minister from another may fairly be ascribed to a sense of humour, of which he was by no means devoid.

Bismarck's appointment to office was an indication that other questions besides that of army reorganization would now be advanced beyond the dead points, though the struggle over army reform was none the less a preliminary step. The greatest of these questions was that of national unity. He had left Frankfort in 1859 carrying with him the mournful reflection that Austria still ruled matters there with a high hand, and that there was no immediate hope of dethroning her.

"After eight years of official experience at Frankfort," he wrote to the Minister Schleinitz on May 12, 1859, "I have taken away the conviction that the federal arrangements form for Prussia an oppressive, in critical times a mortally dangerous, fetter, without affording us the equivalent which Austria, with a quite disproportionately large degree of free action, derives from them. The German Great Powers are not measured with the same standard by the Princes and Governments of the smaller States; their interpretation of

the purposes and laws of the Bund is modified according to the requirements of Austrian policy. . . . We have always to face the same compact majority, the same claim to Prussian submission."

He was convinced, therefore, that until Prussia broke down this assumption of superiority she would never acquire the consideration, respect, and influence to which she was entitled, and that it might be wise policy so to act that the Diet might put itself in a wrong and untenable position, so precipitating changes.

"I think," he said,

"that we should readily take up the gauntlet and regard it not as a misfortune but as an acceleration of the crisis, essential to improvement, if a majority at Frankfort were to adopt a resolution to which we might be able to object as going beyond the competence of the Diet, as an arbitrary alteration of the purpose of the Bund, and an infraction of federal treaties."

The closing words are specially significant, for they illustrate one of the subtlest methods of Bismarck's diplomacy, resorted to again and again in his relations with Austria and France – his habit of endeavouring so to influence the course of events as to bring about the crisis which he desired, while putting his opponents in the wrong.

Bismarck has often been represented as having taken office with a clear and definite programme for the settlement of the German problem, complete in every detail, and legends of his preternatural foresight have been evolved by pious scribes and credulous admirers. Justice can be done to his reputation without crediting him with powers which he did not possess. That he clearly foresaw the exact course which events in Germany would take must be doubted. "It is a misunderstanding of the essence of politics," he said on one occasion, "to suppose that a statesman can draw up a far-going plan and lay down as in a law what he intends to do in one, two, or three years," and no man was more conscious than he that successful politics must largely be a matter of opportunism. It is true that he had written to Manteuffel in July, 1857: "I am convinced that at no distant time we shall have to fight Austria for our existence and that we cannot avoid such a struggle." But in that belief he did not stand alone; most people believed the same thing; the idea of a coming conflict was in the air. As to what was to follow we have the words which he wrote to his wife from Frankfort several years before: "We all act as though we

believed of each other that we are full of thoughts and plans, if only we would express them; and all the time we none of us know a hair's breadth more what will become of Germany."

Most people looked for the reorganization of Germany, and many people had long ago formed definite ideas as to the form of union which they wished to see introduced, but no man dared as yet to predict the development of events with confidence. The Bund might simply be rehabilitated; or Germany might be coalesced into a federal State from which Austria was excluded; or there might in the future be two unions, one of North and another of South Germany; or the States of the North might go their own way under Prussian leadership and leave those of the South to bargain or not with Austria as they pleased. In the abstract any one of these alternatives might still have seemed a possible solution. The one clear conviction which had been brought home to Bismarck by his Frankfort life was that Austria's arrogant claim to superiority must be challenged and shattered. Until that end had been attained all the talk of a new Germany would continue to be as fruitless as hitherto.

Lamenting that Prussia had not seized the opportunity offered by the Italian war of taking the lead in Germany, Helmuth von Moltke, a man destined to be Bismarck's intimate colleague for nearly a generation, wrote three years before (July, 1859) in one of a series of political letters to his brother marked by great insight and prescience: "A bold resolution can only be taken by one man. A Frederick the Great is wanted who will take advice nowhere, but rely entirely upon himself." In Bismarck the man needed by Germany had been found. Nevertheless, it is clear that he was persuaded at this time that the sundered States were not yet ready for unity, and he was not the man to pluck fruit before it was ripe. He wrote to Schleinitz in May, 1859: "I would like to see the word 'German' replace 'Prussian' on our banner only when we are more closely and more opportunely bound to our countrymen than has hitherto been the case." Again: "I see in the existing federal relationship an infirmity of Prussia which sooner or later we shall have to heal *ferro et igni*, unless we undergo a cure for it betimes. Even if to-day the Bund were merely dissolved, without anything being put in its place, I believe that on the basis of such a negative achievement better and more natural relationships would be established between Prussia and her German neighbours than

heretofore."

That a man so clear-sighted and of character so resolute had taken up the German question, however, was a sign that the question could no longer stand still and that a turning-point in German history had come. Of one thing he was convinced – that the question would never be settled by argument or any of the exalted methods of the patriots whose watchword was "Unity through liberty." That policy had been tried by the peoples for half a century, and had failed because the majority of the Princes would not have unity in that way or, if left to themselves, in any other. Still, two generations after the dissolution of the old Empire, Germany continued sundered and broken, and the rulers preferred it so, because in the separation of the multifarious sovereignties seemed to lie the surest security for their political independence. Isolation with weakness was more attractive to them than unity with strength. It was a short-sighted blunder for which several of the Sovereigns were before long destined to pay with their very existence: the States which later were merged in Prussia were the sacrifice made by a particularism which refused to look beyond the conditions and interests of the moment.

In one respect the position had changed since 1859. Magenta and Solferino had shaken the old faith in Austria's military strength and revealed the despotic Habsburg State to be but an imposing image resting on feet that were part of iron but most of clay. Now amongst Austria's allies there were few that doubted that the true centre of the German political system was no longer the South but the North, though not every one had the courage or the candour to admit that the North meant Prussia. Yet still the struggle for leadership continued, Austria persisting in the belief that she had both right and might on her side, Prussia equally sure of her might, and by that title claiming right as well. More and more the dualism was becoming a dualism in name only, since though there were still two minds there was only one strong will.

The unity movement had received a new impetus after 1859 owing to the triumph of the national cause in Italy and to the vigorous agitation begun in that year by the National Association (Nationalverein). This organization owed its origin mainly to a little band of Liberals, first amongst whom was Rudolf von Bennigsen, a Hanover statesman of marked ability and high character, and it was

intended to serve as a meeting- point for all the efforts favourable to the creation of a German federal State under Prussian leadership. Formed at Eisenach, it wished to make Frankfort its headquarters, but the Senate of that city, fearing to incur the displeasure of the Federal Diet, drove it away, whereupon it was welcomed in Gotha by the Liberal-minded ruler of the duchy. The Association represented Little Germany aspirations, and at Austria's request some of the Governments friendly to the existing federal basis suppressed its branches, with their agitation, in their territories. Nevertheless, the Association prospered greatly and did an important work. Under its influence a host of propagandist organizations of all kinds – political, municipal, musical, gymnastic, commercial – were established; and through their instrumentality the agitation of the earlier Burschenschaften and the Jahn societies was repeated in a spirit of equal if soberer earnestness. Urgent resolutions in favour of unity were passed by some of the parliaments of Central and South Germany; local congresses and conferences were held in sympathy with the same object; once more the nation's unchanging faith that destiny was welding it into one was attested in the eyes of rulers, of whom some were hostile, many apathetic, few friendly to the great cause.

The King of Prussia himself seemed to catch some of the fervour of the time, for meeting the Grand Duke of Baden and his Minister-President at Ostend in the summer of 1861, he listened with favour to their proposal of a strong central government, of which Prussia should be the head, co-operating with a parliament of the nation. The scheme outlined was not novel, for it repeated the main features of the untimely constitution which had been adopted by the "three Kings' alliance"; what was novel and welcome was William I's apparent acceptance of it.

At the same time he was as hostile to an open breach with Austria as his brother, the late King, had ever been. The year before, Bismarck, at a conference to which he had been called together with the Ministers Schleinitz and Auerswald, had urged that, while Prussia might still be able to accomplish her German mission in agreement with Austria, it could only be after "the conviction had gained ground in Vienna that in the opposite case we should shrink from neither rupture nor war." Thereupon Schleinitz had spoken in favour of

putting good relations with Vienna first and of maintaining them at all costs, and this view the then Regent appeared to endorse. Meanwhile, a still more ambitious scheme was receiving consideration in Vienna. Its author was Julius Fröbel, an ex-revolutionary of the 1848 days, who had shed his hot humours in exile, and had been taken into his service by Schmerling, now head of the Emperor's Ministry, as an agitator for the Great Germany solution of the federal question. This scheme was first submitted to the Austrian plenipotentiary to the Federal Diet in June, 1861, and through him came to the knowledge of the Ministry and the Emperor. Fröbel proposed an empire to be co-extensive with the existing Bund, the office of emperor to be hereditary in the Austrian house. There was to be a central Diet of two Houses, meeting at Frankfort, one the House of Princes, composed of reigning Sovereigns or Royal Princes, of which the King of Prussia was to be the president, Austria being represented therein by an Archduke, and the other a national assembly, composed of nominees of the State legislatures. There was a certain naïveté about the. cautious and clandestine measures that were to be adopted for preventing the premature disclosure of this project. The constitution was to be drawn up and all the necessary preparatory arrangements were to be made in secrecy, and the completed work was to be sprung upon a wondering world upon a given day.

The plan failed to make a favourable impression upon the Emperor and his advisers, though more might have been heard of it but for the fact that about the time Count Beust, the Saxon Minister, was pushing a scheme of his own, for which he had a parent's fond admiration. This scheme would have continued the Federation, with a central administration located at Frankfort, but proposed, as an alternative to a standing Federal Diet, conferences of Ministers of all the States to be held twice a year, at Ratisbon under Austrian and at Hamburg under Prussian presidency, together with an assembly of delegates of the German legislatures, to be convened whenever the Governments thought necessary, and a Federal Tribunal for the decision of constitutional disputes. This scheme of a travelling exhibition of federal impotence, though ingenious, pleased no one altogether. The King of Würtemberg spoke of it as being "as impractical as it is dangerous," while the verdict upon it of the Baden Minister, Baron von Roggenbach, a warm advocate of Prussian hegemony, was, "This

is offering the German nation not bread but a stone." Austria refused to consider it, since it seemed to countenance the old heresy of parity between the rival Powers, though Beust was in reality far more concerned to give greater prominence to the secondary and minor States, so creating a counterpoise to their powerful allies.

When invited to express an opinion, Prussia replied that she was agreeable to the retention of the Federation (December 20, 1861), but with restricted powers, and subject to the condition that those States which wished to form a closer union within the Federation should be free to do so. Virtually this proposal was a revival of the Union project, and having believed this to be dead and buried, the Emperor resented it, as a renewed invitation to efface Austria from the map of Germany; and he induced all the secondary States to join him in an identical protest (February 2, 1862). As a counter-move he also persuaded these States to join Austria in proposing in the Diet the institution of a federal directory with an assembly of delegates, a proposal which, when introduced, Prussia successfully opposed on the ground that if a representative assembly was to be created at all it must proceed directly from the nation.

Shortly after he became Prussian Minister-President, Bismarck, in the hope of clearing the air, invited the Austrian ambassador, Count Karolyi, to a frank exchange of views (December, 1862), the result of which he published in a circular despatch (January 24, 1863). He told Karolyi that the relations between the two States could not continue as they were, but must become either better or worse, and while he sincerely hoped the former, he was bound to anticipate the latter in view of Austria's attitude. What was to be the end? When the Count suggested that in the event of Austria being attacked by France Prussia would assuredly be found fighting on her side, Bismarck replied that that was an unjustifiable assumption, of which it would be wise to rid himself. Given the continuance of the existing tension, the probability was that if the situation of 1859 were repeated Prussia would ally herself with one of Austria's enemies. He added that Prussia would be guided entirely by Austria's policy towards her; if that policy became one of friendship, Prussia would reciprocate it, but if Austria persisted in her dog-in-the-manger attitude and continued to plot against Prussia in the other States, she would have to accept the consequences. When the Count pro tested that Austria could not agree

to surrender her traditional place in Germany, Bismarck suggested that the centre of Austria's rightful influence was not Vienna but Budapest, an idea for which he had often tried, while Prussian ambassador in Paris, to win a favourable hearing from his Austrian colleague.

Count Vitzthum, in a letter of the time, speaks of the conversation as causing "grave anxiety." It may be regarded, indeed, as Bismarck's first formal warning, uttered with an authority which had long ceased to give urgency to the words of Prussian statesmen, that for Prussia and Austria the parting of the ways had come. For the moment the effect in Vienna seemed to be moderating and salutary. The Court and the Government were shocked at such plain speaking, but Count Rechberg assured the Prussian ambassador that Austria was as desirous of amicable relationships as Prussia, and that he looked forward hopefully to cordial co-operation in the congenial task of stemming revolutionary movements.

At this time the Emperor's advisers appear to have come to the conclusion that if Austria was to take the initiative on the German question she must do so at once. The moment seemed singularly opportune for a decisive attempt to isolate Prussia and win the rest of the States in a body for the Great Germany idea. Prussia was in the throes of the constitutional conflict; her Government was in bad repute throughout Germany; in the South in particular the memory of the betrayal of 1859 rankled; of the secondary States only one, Baden, and of the small States few were truly friendly to her; and it was doubtful whether the German nation, in its existing mood, would be disposed to listen to protests or proposals emanating from Berlin. If there was ever to be federal reform on Austria's lines, now was the time for it. Accordingly, the Emperor convened a congress of the Princes for the purpose of considering the reconstitution of the Federation. The congress met at Frankfort (August 17, 1863), and all the Princes were present save one – the King of Prussia. The Emperor had visited him at Gastein at the beginning of the month and urged him to take part. Left to himself, he would probably have been willing, but Bismarck was with him and dissuaded him on the twofold ground that it was Austria's design to strengthen the federal tie on the existing impossible basis and that a congress of the rulers could in any case only tend to practical results if preceded by a conference of their

Ministers.

The congress was opened with great state, Francis Joseph presiding, yet the proceedings had not gone far before every one realized their unreality in the absence of the principal figure. A majestic play had been brilliantly staged, but when the curtain rose upon the first scene the leading actor was missing. In the awkward situation King John of Saxony volunteered both to write a letter of invitation to the absent monarch and to be its bearer, the congress thereupon adjourning until the royal courier should return. The invitation found the King, now at Baden-Baden, in two minds, but there could be no doubt which would prevail, for Bismarck was still with him keeping watch and ward over his wavering will. All the instincts of courtesy urged him to go. “Invited by thirty Princes, with a King as courier – how can I refuse?” he asked. Bismarck thought only of policy, and replied that if the King went to Frankfort, he, his Minister-President, would return to the home of his fathers and stop there. The invitation was, therefore, again declined.

Nevertheless, the congress continued its work, and after ten sittings duly adopted a draft constitution. Under this Austria was to retain her position at the head of the Federation, a condition declared by the Emperor to be indispensable; the Diet was to be continued; a directory of Princes was to be created for executive purposes, Austria, Prussia, and Bavaria having each one vote; and there was to be a deliberative assembly of delegates appointed by the State legislatures. Such a constitution was a mockery of the national expectations; it showed, as the Austrian historian Friedjung frankly says, “how little Austria had to offer to the German nation.” For Austria, however, the only thing that really mattered was that she should continue to dominate the Federation, and under the Emperor’s scheme that was certain. The draft was adopted by a substantial majority, though not a few of those who approved it did so with avowed or hidden reservations. All the four Kings voted for it, but the Grand Dukes of Baden, Saxe-Weimar, Oldenburg, and Mecklenburg-Schwerin opposed it. The draft was sent to the King of Prussia with a second collective letter commending it to his acceptance. In closing the congress on September 1st the Emperor, whose conduct of its proceedings had won general praise, held out to his allies the hope of a second congress at an early date, in which their labours would be brought to

completion. It was unpropitious, however, that a national conference, hastily convened at Frankfort under Liberal auspices, pronounced strongly against the scheme.

The King of Prussia had referred the draft constitution to his Ministry of State, and on September 15th this body reported on it adversely and proposed an alternative basis of reform. By this Prussia was to have equal rights with Austria in the direction of the affairs of the Federation, the presidency to be held by them in turn; the two States were to have a right of veto upon any federal declaration of war which was not in defence of federal territory; and the idea of an assembly of delegates was to give place to a national parliament, proceeding from direct election, in which the whole of the States should be represented in the ratio of population. The King, on September 23rd, communicated the substance of this report in his reply to the letter from the Congress Princes, informing them that he could only assent to the extension of the competency of the Federation and of its central authority on condition that reform followed these lines. That his Minister-President had been genuinely converted to the idea of a democratic legislature may be doubted. Had Austria made the proposal, he might have been the first to condemn it; but knowing that it was a concession to the nation which it was beyond Austria's power to offer, and seeing in it a hope of winning popular sentiment to Prussia's side, he adopted for expediency's sake a measure which went counter to some of his strongest prejudices.

The federal reform question had again entered a critical phase, and for the moment it seemed as though no further progress could be made unless one of the two rivals gave way. Now, however, the situation was suddenly changed by events which directed the energies of both into an entirely different channel, yet one which was to carry the federal controversy by devious ways to the predestined goal. These events centred in the dispute over the Elbe duchies, a subject too large for further reference here.

In the meantime there had been interludes in domestic affairs. One of these occurred in the spring of 1862 in the form of another quarrel with the Elector of Hesse, the same who had given so much trouble in 1850, and this time matters were settled in Prussia's way. In May that erratic ruler, recovering from the shock of his expulsion twelve years before, decided that the time had come for again suspending the

constitution. Disorder threatening in consequence, the King of Prussia wrote a letter of expostulation to his wilful neighbour and in order to increase its urgency sent it by the hand of a General. The Elector did not recognize the right of Prussia to interfere; if he had suspended an entire constitution, William I had suspended a part, and he refused to receive the King's messenger, haughtily throwing the letter on the table. Count Bernstorff, the Foreign Secretary, asked Bismarck's opinion of the political significance of this insult. "The fact of the Elector throwing a letter on the table," was the laconic reply, "is not a good casus belli, but if you wish for war only appoint me your Under-Secretary and I will promise to bring about civil war within a month." Bernstorff is said to have "drawn back horrified."

Nevertheless, the Government, perhaps amused rather than dismayed by the grave warning of Lord Augustus Loftus, the British ambassador, that he should "let the Hessian question alone, since it was a European question," promptly demanded the dismissal of the Ministers who had given the Elector such bad advice, and on a refusal broke off diplomatic relationships with the Hessian Court. The question was raised in the Federal Diet, which accepted the joint proposal of Prussia and Austria that the Elector should be called upon to restore the constitution of 1831 on pain of federal execution. Before a month had passed the Elector had capitulated and called into office a Liberal Cabinet. No sooner did the Estates meet again at the end of October, however, than the frivolous ruler sent them home and once more dismissed his advisers. Bismarck was now in power, and he judged that the time had come for speaking plainly. In a vigorous note of November 24th he threatened that unless a condition of order and tranquillity were at once and permanently restored, the Prussian Government would set the Diet in operation and the Elector would have to take the consequences. "The Prussian Government, in its own interest," he wrote, "cannot tolerate the existence in the midst of its provinces and of Germany of a hotbed of renewed excitement and disquiet." Frightened by this unaccustomed language and of the contingency to which it pointed, the Elector revoked the dismissal of his Ministry, called the Estates together again, and the constitutional crisis ended.

Prussia emerged from the episode triumphant in every way; she had brought the obstinate Elector to his knees, carried Austria with

her, and had forced her will on the Federal Diet. The humiliation of Olmütz was in a fair way of being effaced.

"The State," Bismarck once wrote, "cannot stand still." Least of all can this be the case in relation to foreign affairs. It was soon seen that under the new guidance Prussia's foreign policy was to be marked by an independence and force which had for a long time been lacking. In March, 1861, Victor Emmanuel had been declared King of Italy by the first national parliament. The new kingdom was recognized by Great Britain in the same month; by France in June; by Prussia only in July of the following year, yet even then to the deep disgust of the legitimist Conservatives and of the Roman Catholics. Although Bismarck was not yet a Minister, no important act of foreign policy was adopted without his advice, and his influence was altogether on the side of Italian unity. His thoughts were of Prussia's rather than of Italy's advantage, though the idea of Austria continuing to lord it in Italy was to him as unnatural as her domination in Germany. To the Foreign Secretary Bernstorff he wrote of Italy at the time: "When once she stands on her own feet I cannot think of a more welcome creation for Prussian policy. It is my conviction that if Italy did not arise of herself we should have to invent her."

All this time the political relations of Prussia and France continued uncertain, the Emperor still cherishing the idea of an alliance, the King neither accepting nor positively rejecting it, though never for a moment regarding it with favour. Nevertheless, overtures from France were reciprocated all the more readily in another direction, where political obligations were not directly involved. Following the conclusion of the Cobden commercial treaty with England of January 23, 1860, Napoleon, hardly foreseeing the importance of his act, proposed to Prussia in the following year the conclusion of a similar treaty on the basis of most-favoured-nation treatment. That meant for Prussia that she would need either to secede from the Customs Union or to carry the other German States with her into the new agreement when the treaty underlying the Union came to be renewed as from the end of 1865. Confident that the community of economic interest which had brought the Union into existence would require its continuance, he did not doubt that the latter alternative would prove feasible, though he was prepared for opposition in the first instance.

A more difficult question was the relation to the proposed

agreement of Austria, whose convention with the Customs Union secured to her special advantages, which might be forfeited if Prussia carried her point. Count Rechberg, the Austrian Foreign Secretary, offered to the French treaty proposals resolute resistance, declaring them to be incompatible with both the spirit and the letter of the treaty of 1853, one of whose provisions, as has been shown, contemplated the admission of Austria to the Customs Union at a later date, so unifying the entire area of the Federation for customs purposes.

Many of the States of the Union likewise received the proposed arrangement with France with distrust and hostility, and asked that they might be called into the negotiations before Prussia came to a final decision. Their request was refused in circumstances which increased the prevailing dissatisfaction. In April, 1862, the draft of the treaty had been communicated to all the Governments and their prompt acceptance invited. Influenced doubtless by the apparent success with which Austria was organizing opposition, Prussia nevertheless signed the treaty (August 2nd), without waiting for the replies of her allies, who in consequence were placed in the position of having either to make a humiliating surrender or to withdraw from the Union

Of the secondary States, Hanover, Bavaria, and Würtemberg all protested their unwillingness to accept the treaty thus concluded over their heads. Saxony proved more compliant; Count Beust's Ministry was still equally hostile, but it was compelled to set material interests against political, and as an industrial and free trade country Saxony stood to gain by any concessions which might be made by the Union to France in return for lower tariffs there. In Prussia both Chambers of the Diet voted approval of the treaty and its acceptance as part of the basis of the new Customs Union, though disagreement with the army organization scheme and a premonition of worse trouble to come had already changed the general attitude of the popular parties towards the Government from one of deference to one of suspicion.

Negotiations for the renewal of the Customs Union were duly opened in 1863. In the meantime Bismarck had become the Prussian Minister-President, and he was a hard as well as a shrewd bargainer. Already he had denounced the old treaties (December, 1862), giving Prussia's allies to understand that the choice before them was the

acceptance of the agreement with France as it stood or the dissolution of the Union – a far more serious matter for them than for Prussia. For a long time no progress was made. Most of the larger States continued to protest, and Austria was behind them with encouragement and counter-offers. So remote did agreement appear to be in the summer of 1864 that Prussia then concluded a new provisional treaty of union with Saxony, Hanover, Hesse Cassel, and some of the smaller States, while for a time there seemed a likelihood that Austria might succeed in forming a rival union, embracing Bavaria, Würtemberg, Nassau, and Darmstadt. Recognizing at last the futility of resistance, and being assured of Prussia's willingness to conclude a new treaty with Austria outside the Union on equitable terms, the hostile Governments capitulated. Before the end of the year the renewal of the Customs Union was assured, and all that remained was to agree with France upon certain modifications of the treaty of August, 1862, which were necessary in order to meet Austria's reasonable expectations. With the conclusion of the general treaty of May 16, 1865, Austria was again and permanently excluded from the Customs Union of the German peoples, while Prussia's economic predominance in Germany was not merely confirmed but strengthened.

Rechberg had attached the greatest importance to the retention in the revised treaty between Austria and the Union of the article providing that negotiations for the admission of Austria to full membership should be opened before the treaty expired twelve years later. Bismarck, wishful to oblige so excellent a colleague, whose position he knew to be far from secure, had favoured that concession, which he regarded as without importance, since he was convinced that the special economic and social conditions of Austria would in any event make her inclusion impossible. A majority of his colleagues were against him, however, and in his absence, when the question came up for settlement in the Cabinet (October, 1864) – he was at Biarritz, seeking health – they succeeded in persuading the King and in carrying their point.

Early in the year 1863 there was offered to Bismarck an opportunity of serving Russia in a critical situation and simultaneously of putting to the test the quality and strength of the apparent friendship between that Power and France, and this opportunity he was prompt to use. Undeterred by the terrible reprisals which

followed the revolution of 1861, the Poles again broke into insurrection in Warsaw in January, 1863. With the avowed object of preventing the spread of the movement to East Prussia, yet more for the purpose of doing Russia a good turn, Bismarck persuaded the King to conclude with Czar Alexander II a military convention (February 8th) under which the two Governments were to make common cause against rebellion amongst their Polish populations. In the event of a rising the troops of both the countries were to occupy the frontier districts and to be allowed to cross over into neighbouring territory. Prussia did, in fact, mass a large force upon the Russian frontier, and General von Alvensleben, who negotiated the treaty in St. Petersburg, was instructed to inform the Czar that it was at his service if needed. Prince Gortchakoff was then the Russian Chancellor and at the height of his power. Bismarck was glad to work together with so great a man, and he had a further inducement so to do in the conviction, which he had already confessed to Bernstorff (November, 1861), that the existing feeling of good-will between the two countries was purely dynastic and that the nations themselves were going more and more apart.

As soon as the Polish convention came to the knowledge of the other Great Powers, it roused a storm of indignation, in which the democratic party both in Prussia and Germany generally fully shared. Bismarck himself appears to have thought at the time that he had done a dangerous thing, for on February 20th he wrote with relief to the King that "seeing how matters seem to be shaping themselves in Poland . . . we shall hardly be called upon for active co-operation there, and the convention thus gives us the advantage of having secured cheaply for the future the gratitude of Czar Alexander and Russian sympathy." Napoleon was quick to voice the displeasure of Western Europe. True to his enthusiasm for the cause of nationalism, he had taken the Polish question warmly to heart. When meeting the Czar at Stuttgart in 1857 he had told him that only one shadow fell on the amicable relations between their two countries, the woes of Poland, and that the more the Czar could do to alleviate the condition of his Polish subjects the more surely he would be able to count on the friendship of the French nation. Now he declared that such a convention made the Polish question no longer a local but a European concern, and he invited the Cabinets of London and Vienna to join

him in an identical note of protest to Prussia. The British Cabinet, while condemning the convention, was unwilling to take so serious a step. Lord Palmerston had ceased to trust Napoleon, and it was his opinion that the proposal of intervention was merely a trap; he suspected, indeed, that the Emperor was determined beforehand that the note of protest should be one which Prussia would be compelled to reject and that he would make its rejection a pretext for occupying the Rhenish provinces. On the other hand, Earl Russell, the Foreign Secretary, believed that Bismarck was not the tempter, but the tempted, and that Napoleon's remonstrances should be addressed to St. Petersburg. As Austria also declined to take action, the proposal fell to the ground. In the meantime Bismarck had assured the British ambassador in Berlin that the convention was without practical importance and "a dead letter," and that there was no likelihood whatever of its provisions being put into operation; in the event it was not ratified.

Matters became graver when from April forward the same Powers, jointly and severally, made urgent representations to the Czar's Government on behalf of the Poles, basing their action on the fact that they were parties to the treaty of 1815, which revised the frontiers of Russia's Polish dominions. France emphasized the need for a condition of permanence, which could only be created by the application of humane and benevolent measures; Austria wanted peace in the interest of the tranquillity and security of her own Polish province, Galicia; Great Britain felt strongly on the subject of fidelity to treaties. Earl Russell went to the length of proposing an elaborate programme of reforms – a political amnesty, representative government, a Polish administration, liberty of conscience, the use of the national language, and the like: in short, just such a programme as might, mutatis mutandis, have befitted Ireland at that time had British statesmen been as conscious of the urgency of ameliorative measures in near as in distant centres of misrule and discontent. Gortchakoff treated lightly this well-meant advice as a species of dictation, and when a little later the British ambassador showed him another eloquent despatch, in which Russell hazarded the opinion that Russia had forfeited her title to Poland because of her neglect to fulfil her promises to its inhabitants, he refused to accept it until this sentence had been omitted.

To all these representations Russia replied that she did not recognize any outside right of interference, while the Czar urged the King of Prussia to do his utmost to detach his Vienna friend from the Western Powers. That the Czar was prepared if necessary for another trial of strength appears from his invitation to King William that he would state his position. “How do you interpret the duties and interests of Germany in this situation?” he asked on June 1st. “If it comes to a rupture, what will be your action? What do you expect from Germany? What do you expect from Austria? I know that I can rely on you, as you can on me.”

Notwithstanding that Russia still refused to accept remonstrances, and in September declared that the matter was closed, Napoleon fell back upon the idea of a European conference. The idea of a conference had upon Napoleon all the soothing influence of the “comfortable word Mesopotamia.” Conferences were his unfailing cure for Continental discords and disputes, and his belief in them was never shaken. His confidence in this specific was subject to one qualification only: the medicine must be administered by himself. Unless France, therefore, convened the conference, the Governments which conferred would labour in vain. Accordingly he made a proposal to this effect in November. But the conference was to consider other questions besides the condition of Poland. “The political edifice of Europe,” Napoleon wrote, “reposes on the Treaties of Vienna, yet it is crumbling away on all sides.” “It is impossible not to admit,” he said, “that on almost all points the treaties are destroyed, modified, disregarded or menaced. Hence there are duties without rule, rights without title, pretensions without restraint.” It was a daring claim to be made by the man who had seized Savoy and coveted the Rhine provinces. Great Britain once more proved the spoke in the wheel. Lord Palmerston saw danger ahead. Napoleon wanted an adjustment of his eastern frontiers, but he was not the only ruler who hankered after new territory at the expense of some one else. Fearing that the inevitable clash of interests which a European conference would create might lead to a general Continental war, Palmerston declined to allow his country to take part. Earl Russell made the mistake of giving his Government’s reasons for abstention and even arguing them. He objected to a roving inquiry “without fixed objects ranging over the map of Europe and exciting hopes and

expectations which they might find themselves unable either to gratify or to quiet." The consequence was that while all the other Powers except Prussia were equally opposed to a conference, Great Britain alone bore the reproach for its rejection. By thus wrecking the project she wounded Napoleon in a specially sensitive place.

The well-intended action of the Powers did the Poles neither good nor harm. The most substantial result of the episode was that it drew Russia and Prussia nearer together and prepared the way for their later co-operation in other directions. Bismarck does not appear to have taken England's action unkindly, for meeting Lord Granville, then Foreign Secretary, a little later, he assured him of his "general wish that England and Prussia should be good friends."

Nevertheless, the episode threw light upon Bismarck's attitude towards the problem of Polish nationality, later to become a capital question of Prussian politics. His opinion of the problem at this time may be noted here for future reference. "Every success for the Polish national movement," he wrote to Count Bernstorff in 1861, "is a defeat for Prussia, and we cannot fight against this element by simple justice, but only according to the rules of war. The Polish question cannot be judged with impartiality, but only with hostility."

BISMARCK'S VISIT TO LONDON IN JUNE, 1862

Careful consideration of all available data has forced me to the conclusion that the utterance attributed to Bismarck in the often told story of the dinner given by Baron Brunnow, the Russian ambassador in London, to the Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar in June, 1862, must be discounted severely, and for that reason I hesitate to refer to it in the text. Count Vitzthum von Eckstädt, the Saxon envoy in London, first gave currency to the story in his Memoirs, *St. Petersburg and London*, and it is to the effect that at this gathering Bismarck (making a purely unofficial visit to London from Paris at the end of June) met Disraeli, to whom he spoke "somewhat" (*ungefähr*) – an important qualification, invariably ignored by the later retailers of the conversation – as follows:

"I shall soon be compelled to take over the direction of the Prussian Ministry. My first care will be to reorganize the army, with or without the help of the Diet. The King has rightly undertaken this task, but he cannot carry it through with his present advisers. When the army has been brought to a condition in which it will command respect, I shall seize the first pretext for declaring war on Austria, dissolving the Germanic Federation, subduing the secondary and small States, and giving Germany national unity under Prussia's leadership. I have come here to say this to her Majesty's Ministers."

Vitzthum relates that this utterance was repeated to him by Disraeli himself. It is noteworthy, however, that Disraeli has left no record of it, and though his biographer, Mr. Buckle, quotes it, he does it on Vitzthum's authority. That Bismarck does not record this special incident of his London visit, or give any indication of the words attributed to him, may not in the circumstances be peculiar. There is, it seems to me, strong internal evidence that Bismarck cannot have spoken exactly as Vitzthum represents. It would not have been accurate, even had it been judicious, to say at that time that he was about to become Minister-President of Prussia. The fact is that his future was altogether obscure. In the preceding January he had written to his sister from St. Petersburg: "I should be ungrateful both to God and man if I said that I was not happy here and wanted a change: I am more frightened of (entering) the Ministry than of a cold

bath. I would rather take any vacant (diplomatic) post or return to Frankfort, or even Berne, where I felt very comfortable." Just before the London visit he had, in fact, received the Paris embassy, and while he no doubt regarded the appointment as a steppingstone to the Cabinet, he was apparently still not wishful to be called up higher for a time; the outlook at the time was far from certain. On reaching Paris he writes on June 2nd to Roon, who was eager to see him in the Ministry, preferably at the head: "I still flatter myself with the hope that I shall seem less indispensable to his Majesty when I have been out of his sight for a while, and that some hitherto unrecognized statesman will be found to supplant me, so that I may ripen a little more here." Even on July 15th he writes to the same correspondent that he has heard that "the King is doubtful whether I can be of any use in the present session, and whether my appointment, if it takes place at all, ought not to be postponed till the winter. . . . If I am asked for my opinion, I shall give it in favour of keeping in the background a few months longer."

The day before he had written to his wife likewise that the King could not decide whether to ask him to be Minister-President or not – and, indeed, when later he made the appointment, he did it, as we have seen, with misgiving – so that he was preparing to remain in Paris until the winter.

In the meantime, "in the lack of any kind of political task or business," as he writes in *Reflections and Reminiscences* (vol. i., p. 281), he makes this visit to England, and afterwards starts for "a longish tour in the South of France," where he "forgets all about politics and reads no newspapers." In August he is making holiday plans for the following year on the assumption that he would still be in France. Even when in September he is called to Berlin to see the King he goes with the intention of asking that he may be allowed to settle down in Paris, though in the event he is offered and accepts office with the provisional presidency of the Ministry until Hohenzollern should retire, when he was to succeed him and take also the portfolio of Foreign Affairs.

The facts known, therefore, do not suggest that Bismarck's position in June could have justified him in announcing beforehand a Ministerial programme so ambitious and sensational as the one credited to him by Vitzthum. Moreover, as to the programme itself,

Bismarck was never a boaster, and the words ascribed to him are not in his manner. Finally, even had he gone to London with the object of divulging his purposes to the Government there, it is not likely that he would have first unbosomed himself to the leader of the Opposition, whom he had never met before. If he communicated such intentions to any of the Queen's Ministers, it would be to the head of the Government (Lord Palmerston) o r the Foreign Secretary (Lord Russell), and it is significant that neither of them has left any record of his having done so.

It is quite possible that, in the course of this unofficial voyage of discovery, Bismarck may have discussed with Disraeli and others some or all of the measures enumerated by Vitzthum, and even have appeared to advocate them. But to have represented them, to a Government so friendly to Austria as the British Government then was, as the basis of a coming Ministerial programme, would have been an act of arrogance and indiscretion quite unworthy of so skilful a diplomat.

It is also justifiable to recall how in a letter written to Count Beust on October 10th, just after his appointment to office, Bismarck said:

"Considering your knowledge of men and affairs, I need not assure you that I stand quite aloof from all the adventurous plans that have been attributed to me by political novices and by opponents in the Press. The untruthful, distorted and disconnected reports of supposed sayings of mine, by which people have endeavoured to bring my judgment into discredit, must have been appreciated by you with a full knowledge of the facts. I do not feel called upon to force Prussia into the channels of Sardinian policy, and if any one in my position had any such feeling he would have no basis upon which he could reduce his theory to practice. . . . As to internal affairs, my most urgent duty is to preserve and strengthen the power of the Crown against the increasing influence of the representative Chamber and the parliamentary officials. I consider that this task can be accomplished without departing from the positive injunctions of the constitution. I shall endeavour to spare as much as possible the feelings of sticklers for constitutional forms, and to return as soon as possible to constitutional forms, always bearing in mind, however, that our constitutional oath places 'fidelity to the King' first."

Bismarck had no severer critic in later years than Beust, yet Beust

affirms that this utterance “must not be regarded as wanting in sincerity.” In fine, while accepting it as perfectly credible that Bismarck may, in the way of speculation, have mentioned in conversation some or all of the measures enumerated by the Saxon envoy, I regard as questionable the story that he avowed these measures as representing the deliberate programme of a Government which had not been formed and did not at the moment appear imminent, and as still more doubtful the idea that he intended to communicate them to a Cabinet to which he was not accredited and whose cool attitude towards Prussia was well known to him.

THE ELBE DUCHIES AND THE DANISH WAR, 1846-1865

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IN THE MEMORIES OF Prussians of to-day the Danish war of 1864 lives chiefly owing to the fact that it renewed a military reputation which had become tarnished, and added to their country the flourishing double province of Schleswig-Holstein. For Germany at large the most important political effect of the war was the fact that it directly brought on another, of which the purpose and result was the ejection of Austria from the Germanic household.

How far the Danish war may be justly regarded as a war of necessity, as an event which, in Bismarck's favourite phrase, lay "in the nature of things," may at one time have been a disputable question, but it is such no longer. Writing long after the leading figure in this episode passed away, leaving behind him not a few ungarnished disclosures of the aims and motives which influenced his public life, it is possible to give to the question a positive answer. Bismarck wanted the war, intended and schemed it, from the beginning. For this statement we have his own testimony. He has left it on record that from early days he coveted for Prussia the territories which divided her from the Danish monarchy proper, and that his chief reason for so doing was the knowledge that without the double seaboard which they offered Prusso-Germany could never hope to become a maritime Power. Even if, he said, three wars had been necessary, as in the case of Prussia's conquest of Silesia, he would have fought them for the sake of such a prize. "The diplomatic campaign of which I am proudest was that over Schleswig-Holstein," he said on one occasion; and when asked if he wanted the duchies from the first, he answered, "Yes, certainly, immediately after the death of the King of Denmark" (in 1863), adding that although he knew that to carry his will would mean a determined struggle with the King, he never once despaired of success. Evidence to the same effect from the same source might be multiplied.

The dispute over the duchies was, and still is, full of difficulties: it involved questions of succession, claims of agnates and cognates, sovereign rights and fief rights; it was complicated by disputatious treaties and equivocal agreements; it involved issues which brought into operation the German federal laws; and it became the subject of repeated conferences between the European States, of which four at least – Denmark, Austria, Prussia, and Russia – were directly concerned. Ponderous disquisitions have been written upon the

episode since it became a closed chapter of history, yet even now it presents a legal labyrinth unique of its kind. It was of this dispute that Lord Palmerston said in 1863 that only three men had ever understood its clue – one was the Prince Consort, and he was dead; the second was a Danish Minister, who had gone mad over it; and he himself was the third, and he had forgotten it.

For present purposes, since the question now possesses only historical interest, it will be sufficient to follow the threads of the story from the eve of the final developments.

There had been quarrelling over Schleswig and Holstein for centuries, but it had been confined to Denmark and the duchies. It was only when the dispute became part of the problem of German unity, and Austria and Prussia were drawn in, first as allies and then as antagonists, that the decisive stage was reached when a settlement became inevitable. Schleswig and Holstein, bound to each other by essential community of race, language, and institutions, were also bound by personal union to the Danish Crown; the Danish rulers were kings in Denmark and dukes in the duchies. Holstein was altogether German in population, and from the time of Charlemagne it had formed part of the Holy Roman Empire; while of the population of Schleswig a portion, living in the extreme north, was pure Danish. The duchies had immemorially enjoyed a wide measure of self-government, and successive Sovereigns had guaranteed to them this autonomy, and the many local rights and immunities attached to it. They had their own constitutions, Diets, administrations, and judicial systems, and their inhabitants enjoyed identical civil rights. The duchies valued their union almost as much as their political independence; the motto of the hardy peoples of this sea-girt region was “For ever undivided,” and the Danish Kings in their coronation oath swore to preserve unruptured the ancient bond.

With the dissolution of the Empire the connection of Holstein with Germany temporarily ceased, and though together with the small duchy of Lauenburg it entered the Germanic Federation created by the Congress of Vienna in 1815, it did so mediately in the person of the King of Denmark, whose title to sovereignty was still unquestioned.

Throughout the first half of the century successive Danish Kings sought, first by mild and later by stronger measures, to make the union between their kingdom and the duchies more definite and

intimate. In their resolve to complete the unity of the Danish dominion the Kings had behind them a strong national movement represented by the "Eider Danes," who wished, by extending the limits of the monarchy to the river Eider, dividing South Schleswig from Holstein, to cut off German influence. And just as in Germany the democrats of that time sought to obtain national unity by the creation of constitutional government on popular principles, so the Danish democrats held out to the people of Schleswig the promise of popular government as the price of unity. On July 8, 1846, in an "open letter," Christian VIII, as Duke of Schleswig-Holstein, proposed a complete territorial and constitutional union between Denmark and Schleswig, and the subjection of both duchies to the Danish Crown law. For the latter measure there was a strong reason. The Danish Crown might descend in the female line, but agnatic succession applied in the duchies. The male line of the Danish royal house, however, was about to become extinct, and unless the duchies were joined to the kingdom they would pass to one of three collateral families, that of Augustenburg. Against the proposed changes not only the heads of the families whose claims were thus threatened, the Dukes of Augustenburg and Glücksburg and the Grand Duke of Oldenburg, but also the Estates of both duchies, promptly protested.

Towards the end of 1847 the King approved a new constitution, framed on Liberal principles, which was intended to give effect to these changes, but he died before it could receive his signature (January 20, 1848). One of the first public acts of his successor, Frederick VII, was to sign and promulgate this document. The spirit of revolution was abroad at the time, and in few European countries were the peoples in a mood to parley with despots. Accordingly, the population of Schleswig, incensed at this infraction of its ancient liberties, rose in insurrection, and was at once joined by Holstein. With a view to the better assertion of their independence, the Germans of the northern duchy also called for its admission into the Germanic Federation alongside the sister territory. Throughout Germany there was a responsive outcry. Thousands of armed volunteers crossed over into Schleswig in order to assist the national rising and repel the inroad of Danish troops from the north, while the King of Bavaria sent officers to help in organizing and directing the rebellion. All political parties alike, whether Conservative, Liberal, or

democratic, each from its own standpoint, as the special guardian of legitimism or constitutionalism or the principle of popular sovereignty, condemned the action of the Danish King as high-handed and indefensible.

As the Duke of Schleswig was also ruler in the sister duchy, and as this duchy was a member of the Germanic Federation, the Diet was compelled to move, and accordingly in April it commissioned Prussia to assert the federal authority in Holstein. The Duke of Augustenburg, Christian August, had already, invoked the help of the King of Prussia, who had formally signified his recognition of the union and independence of the duchies, as well as of the agnatic principle – which meant the acknowledgment of the Duke's claim to the succession – and sent troops to the frontier, calling upon other North German States to co-operate. Denmark, on the other hand, had appealed for help to Russia. For the present, however, the Czar, though jealous of the duchies becoming a German State, owing to their value for maritime purposes, was indisposed to interfere, and counselled a policy of procrastination. In the meantime a rival Government had been formed in the duchies, with its seat at Rendsburg, on the Schleswig-Holstein frontier, and with it both the Duke of Augustenburg and his brother, Prince Frederick, openly associated themselves.

It is doubtful whether the King of Prussia believed that serious warfare would result from his action. He was on good terms with the Danish King, and had already endeavoured by admonitory letters to convince him of the error of his ways. Even now he was of opinion that all that was necessary to a peaceful solution was a show of force, and therein he entirely misread the Danish spirit. Nevertheless, time might still have been gained for peaceful negotiations had not the Danish army, massed near Flensburg, fallen on the troops raised by the duchies, and forced them back to the Eider. Thereupon the Prussian force, under General Wrangel, crossed the frontier river and drove the Danes out of Schleswig. In this military operation Austria had so far taken no part. Though holding the presidency of the Federation, she had sent no troops to Schleswig, being unwilling to prejudice and imperil her relations as a European Power by joining in a dispute in which she had as yet no direct concern, but, on the contrary, well satisfied that Prussia, having precipitately involved

herself in difficulties, should continue to bear the odium of interference.

For European opinion on the whole was hostile to Prussia. The declaration of Frederick William IV that the duchies could descend only in the male line, with the implied suggestion of the impending division of the Danish monarchy, had created great uneasiness in the Courts and Chancelleries friendly to Denmark and her dynasty, and the suspicion was entertained – unjustifiably at the time – that Prussia protested against Danish annexation only because she contemplated annexation herself. The retention of Denmark and the duchies as an undivided sovereignty was regarded as the interest of all the Great Powers. England's traditional sympathies made her unwilling to see Denmark weakened; Russia, as representing the Oldenburg line, had dynastic interests in the kingdom which were opposed to the interests of Prussia; even Prussia had to reckon with the probability that Denmark, if convinced that her existence was seriously threatened, would look to an alliance with Sweden; while Austrian statecraft, though seldom prescient, must have been alive to the possibility that the detachment of the duchies from Denmark would bring them more directly within the Prussian sphere of influence.

By the summer isolation had become uncomfortable for Prussia. Denmark, though unable to withstand her enemy on land, was more than a match for him on sea, and the blockade by Danish vessels of the North Sea coast, with the consequent serious injury inflicted upon Prussian maritime trade, was proving very effective. Moreover, Frederick William IV's conscience was troubling him. Whatever may be said of the King as a statesman, he had hitherto shown a profound respect, and even veneration, for the principle of legitimism, and his hostility to revolutionary movements was not merely sincere but vehement. Distressed by the thought that he was warring against a lawful ruler and aiding and abetting an insurrectionary cause, his resolution began to waver, and when England and Russia offered mediation, the offer was accepted. With the Englishman's instinct for rough-and-ready solutions, Lord Palmerston, recognizing that the question of nationality was at the root of the trouble, proposed that the northern part of Schleswig, being Danish, should be joined to Denmark for good and all, and that the rest of the duchy, being essentially German, should be joined with Holstein to the Bund, while

continuing still in personal union with Denmark. Prussia might have agreed to a solution on these lines had not objection been raised in other quarters. The provisional Government which had been set up in the duchies had in March proposed the same solution, but now it did its best to thwart it, and Denmark also disagreed.

To make matters worse, Sweden came to her neighbour's help, and Russia warned Frederick William IV that the occupation of Jutland, which had been overrun by Wrangel's troops, was a bar to peaceful negotiations. The King therefore ordered Wrangel to withdraw, much to the disgust of that despotic soldier and of Prussian opinion. The negotiations were now resumed, and the provisional basis of a truce was duly arranged. One of these conditions was that pending a final settlement the troops of both of the belligerents should evacuate the duchies, but that a small federal force might remain in the south of Holstein. With this condition Wrangel refused to comply, and as Frederick William IV feared to supersede him, hostilities again broke out. After a further period of wearisome negotiations, which threatened repeatedly to break down owing to obstinacy on both sides, a seven months' armistice was concluded (August 26, 1848), at Malmö, on conditions which more than half recognized the Danish claims, for it approved the separation of Schleswig from Holstein. The Danish Government had for a long time been illiberal in its treatment of the German population of Schleswig, and the intolerant restrictions upon the right of public worship and the use of the German language had, in particular, created great bitterness. It was part of the bargain now concluded that all such restrictions should be removed.

For the rebuff which was inflicted upon the German national cause by the Treaty of Malmö, Frederick William IV was held to be guilty, and he lost still further in popularity. The National Assembly, still in futile session in Frankfort, was indignant at what seemed to be an act of betrayal, and called for the renunciation of the treaty, a decision which, though soon afterwards reversed, led to the resignation of the Ministry. It was significant that the friends of peace at that time were the Conservative monarchists, and that the belligerents were the extreme democrats. For the popular parties no measures against Denmark were too strong, and they called for the proclamation of a united federal war against the offending kingdom.

In the spring of 1849 hostilities broke out afresh and continued

with varying fortunes for several months. On July 10th, at Berlin, a further armistice was arranged, and with it were concluded preliminaries of peace, under which the Prussian troops evacuated Schleswig. That duchy was now placed provisionally under three commissioners, representing Denmark, Prussia, and England respectively, while Holstein received two Stadholders. Another year passed, however, before a definitive peace was concluded between the combatants with the help of the Powers (July 2, 1850). By it Prussia withdrew from the struggle and practically recognized the *status quo ante*. Such an issue of the war was regarded at home as a weak surrender, and for it Frederick William IV was never forgiven. He was, however, the victim of superior force, for all the Powers were against him, Russia most of all, and he was heartily glad to be out of the complication. Desultory fighting continued for a time between Denmark and the duchies, but there was no longer any doubt as to the outcome.

It was in part the urgency of a settlement of this dispute, which kept the Powers in a state of alarm, that led the Czar to offer his services as mediator, or more truly as adjudicator, at the conferences held at Warsaw and Olmütz in October and November, 1850. Nicholas I cared less for the rights and wrongs of the dispute than for the quelling of the revolutionary movement in the duchies and the preservation of the peace of Europe, and when Austria and Prussia showed reluctance to agree he laid down the law in no uncertain terms. Neither Prussia nor Germany, he said, had any business to interfere in Schleswig at all, and as for Holstein, he threatened that unless the Bund would at once undertake to restore tranquillity there he would do it himself. By the Punctation of Olmütz (November 29th) it was agreed that the Holstein question should be referred to the Federal Diet for settlement, and that Austria and Prussia should at an early date send commissioners to the duchy with a view to a general pacification.

Shortly before this the first Protocol of London (August 2, 1850) was signed by Russia, Great Britain, France, Sweden, and Austria, which thereby recognized the integrity of the Danish kingdom, while reserving a pronouncement upon the question of succession. Already the Danish King had issued a manifesto in which he formally declared that Schleswig should not be incorporated in the monarchy. The call

for the cessation of hostilities was now urgent in Germany, and early in the following year a force of Austrians, commissioned by the Diet, suppressed the rising in the duchies. Finally, the question of succession was decided by the Treaty of London (May 8, 1852), which, after affirming the integrity of the entire Danish monarchy, declared that in the event of the male line of the Danish royal house dying out the crown should fall, both in Denmark and the duchies, to Prince Christian of Schleswig- Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg and his heirs. It was expressly stated that the reciprocal rights and obligations of the King of Denmark and of the Germanic Federation relating to the duchies of Holstein and Lauenburg, together with the rights and obligations established by the Federal Act of 1815 and by the existing Federal Law, were not affected by the treaty.

In the meantime the King of Denmark had repeated his pledge not to incorporate Schleswig, as well as the old promises to remedy the grievances of his subjects in the duchies, undertakings held later both by Prussia and Austria to be so important that the Treaty of London stood or fell with their faithful observance. This treaty was accepted and signed by Great Britain, France, Prussia, Austria, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, but not by the Germanic Federation, which did not take part in the London conference. “The poor Schleswigers have to pay for everything,” was the comment of Prince Albert on this settlement. Now the Duke of Augustenburg was induced to renounce, both for himself and his family, all claim to the succession, in consideration of compensation over and above the value of his properties in Schleswig which had beep confiscated by the Danish Government, a settlement which gave him the sum of between three and four hundred thousand pounds.

In accepting this settlement Prussia stultified her past action and acknowledged as legitimate claims which she had contested in a long and arduous war. It is probable that the King’s compliant attitude was connected with a decision which the Powers meeting in London at that time had given in his favour in another territorial dispute. This was the question of Neuchâtel. This little principality had come to the Electors of Brandenburg at the end of the seventeenth century, and after changing hands at the will of Napoleon it returned to Prussia in 1815. In the revolutionary movement of 1848 the people of Neuchâtel threw off Prussian sovereignty and established a republic. The London

agreement of 1852 (May 24th) reasserted Prussian rule, though only nominally and, as it proved, temporarily. The ultimate settlement of the question may be anticipated here. For four years the Royalist and Radical parties in the principality held each other in check, until in 1856 a republic was again proclaimed. In March of the following year a congress of ambassadors met in Paris to determine the future of the restless population, and by a treaty concluded in May the King of Prussia renounced all rights in the principality and agreed to its incorporation as an independent republic in the Swiss Confederation, which paid him a million francs as compensation. For Prussia the loss of Neuchâtel was no misfortune. An isolated enclave within the frontiers of Switzerland, with France to the west, it was like a house to which the owner has no right of way. The nation in general, therefore, regarded its abandonment – as it had before regarded its possession – with complete unconcern.

Prussia's withdrawal on the duchy question contributed towards another notable episode which fell to the year 1852, yet of which the full significance was realized only in later years. This was the sale of the federal navy which had been industriously created by the National Assembly of 1848, and the States of the Union, partly by votes of public money and partly by collections. Transferred later to the revived Diet of the Federation, it had been neglected, like so much else in the care of that soulless and irresponsible body. Now deeming it superfluous, the Diet, to the disgust of all patriotic Germans, ordered it to be sold by private treaty, and the transaction was completed by Hannibal Fischer, a former Federal Minister of Marine.

It has seemed desirable to indicate in broad outlines the development of the Schleswig-Holstein dispute in the middle of the century, in order to make clear the Prussian position and contention at that time. The dispute was then regarded as essentially one between Denmark and the duchies, and the action taken by Prussia, both independently and in conjunction with Austria, contemplated an adjustment from that standpoint only. Had Denmark been willing unequivocally to respect the treasured political union and autonomy of the feudatory territories, it is possible that there would have been no later trouble. The position created in 1852 was virtually the *status quo ante bellum*. The Treaty of London certainly gave no countenance to any pretension, however contingent, on the part of Prussia to scot

or lot in the territories, nor, in spite of the speculations which were indulged in by an aggressive section of public opinion, did the King or official Prussia in general as yet advance any such claim. True to his own words, the King had stood forth as the champion of three principles – the autonomy of the duchies, their continued union, and succession in the male line, with the consequent endorsement of the Duke of Augustenburg's claim. That is the essential fact to be remembered in following the subsequent course of events.

Eleven years passed before the dispute again entered an acute phase (1863), and though it now took at once a new development, the contestants were the same. Bismarck had come upon the scene, however, and a clue to his action throughout the final stages of the dispute may be found in words which he wrote on December 22, 1862, shortly after he became Prussian Minister-President: "It is certain that the Danish question can be settled in a way desirable for us only by war. An occasion for war can be found at any moment that our relation to the Great Powers is favourable for waging it." At the end of March, 1863, Frederick VII of Denmark issued a patent formally annexing Schleswig, while leaving to Holstein its old autonomy. He appeared to have chosen the time well. Prussia, as we have seen, was in the throes of the constitutional struggle. The relations between the Government and the Diet were hopelessly strained. With a bitter political quarrel in progress at home, therefore, it seemed unlikely that Bismarck would welcome adventures abroad. Nevertheless, the Prussian Government promptly invited Austria to join in a formal protest, to be followed, in the event of its failure, by armed intervention. The fact that Prussia had taken the initiative was one of significance for the new relations of the two major Powers. Hitherto it had been Prussia which in German affairs had co-operated with Austria; now the order was reversed.

Apathetic on the question twelve years before, Austria now needed no persuasion. Still she had no direct interest in the duchies, which for her had no material value, yet it was obvious that for Prussia they would be of great importance, in giving her a larger seaboard and command of the neck of land dividing the North and Baltic Seas, already marked out for a canal. Above all, remembering the keen interest of all the German States in the Schleswig-Holstein question, as shown in 1848-1852, Austria was apprehensive that by remaining

aloof she would be abrogating her claim to the leadership of Germany in favour of her ambitious rival.

The Lower House of the Prussian Diet did not allow Bismarck's proposal of intervention to pass without protest. On April 17th it declared by resolution that "the Prussian Government, owing to its isolation, was not in a position to wage war against Denmark, and were it proposed the House would resist any such measure, since it was bound to fail." Bismarck's reply was one of defiance. "I can assure you and foreign countries," he said, "that if we (the Government) think it necessary to wage war we shall do so with or without your consent."

As the first protest proved unavailing, the two allied Governments induced the Federal Diet in July to demand of Denmark the annulment of the patent and the restoration of the union of the duchies, failing which the allies would occupy Holstein. Lord Palmerston had declared in the House of Commons (July 23rd) that if the independence and rights of Denmark were violently attacked "those who make the attempt would find in the result that it would not be Denmark alone with which they would have to deal." It was an unfortunate speech, for although Lord Palmerston no doubt had in mind the contingency of French and Russian as well as British action, his words were justifiably regarded as a moral pledge that his own country, at any rate, would not remain neutral. Thus encouraged, the Danish King refused compliance, and the matter dragged on until September, when he laid before his parliament a new constitution formally uniting Schleswig to the monarchy.

In the meantime endeavours, not all of a discreet kind, were being made by disinterested Powers to avert disaster. Protesting in a circular despatch of September 3rd against the threatened occupation of Holstein by federal troops as an infraction of the laws of the Bund, the Danish Ministry added the significant words, "We have every reason to believe that we shall not be dependent on our own resources in a struggle in which not only the fate of Denmark but the holiest interests of the entire North are concerned." It was not difficult to surmise the origin of this inspired menace when, in a note of September 29th, the British Government reminded the Federal Diet that "Her Majesty is by the Treaty of London of May 8, 1852, pledged to recognize the integrity and independence of Denmark," and

accordingly declared that it would “not recognize the military occupation of Holstein as a legitimate use of the power of the Germanic Federation.” Nevertheless, the British invitation that the Diet should accept the mediation of the Powers was declined on the ground that an act of execution in Holstein was a purely internal affair of Germany, and that the Federation had not been a party to the Treaty of London.

It is questionable whether the British Government had any idea of the strength of the will which it had ventured to challenge, or of the fact that the Prussia with which it had had to do since the regency was not the compliant Prussia of old – Austria’s tool and Europe’s scorn. There were British Ministers and diplomats who had not even yet succeeded in mastering the Prussian Minister-President’s name and rank, and who, either from indolence or affectation, called him alternately “Monsieur de Bismarck” and “Count.” Lord Palmerston, accustomed to lay down the law upon all questions of Continental politics in which he took a hand, hardly gave a thought to the audacious chanticleer who was challenging his own roost. He was now eighty years old, and with the obstinacy of despotic age, refused to believe that the Prussia which he had known for half a century was capable of producing a strong statesman. He therefore persisted in applying to Bismarck the measure which he had applied to his weak predecessors, with the result that in the ensuing battle of wits and wills he was beaten at his own game.

Like the Government, the nation warmly sympathized with Denmark – all the more since a beautiful daughter of the Danish royal house had just before (March, 1863) become Princess of Wales – with just as much or as little understanding of the questions at issue as English public opinion in general shows upon foreign politics at any time. The Queen stood almost alone in taking the Prussian side of the dispute, believing that Prussia was fighting for the independence of the duchies, a cause to which she was warmly attached. The three points which she urgently impressed upon her Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville, were “not to let this country be dragged into a useless war, not to agree to a settlement which could not be durable, and not to let a Sovereign be imposed upon the duchies against their will and wish.” Perhaps the Queen’s known German leanings made the sympathies of the Government and nation more Danish than they might otherwise

have been. In any event the consequence of official sympathy so generous and emphatic was to encourage Denmark to indulge expectations of assistance which never had a chance of fulfilment.

For the rest, Denmark was not free from reproach. She had hitherto ignored her pledges, given repeatedly since 1848, to respect the independent life of the duchies, to afford to their populations equal rights, and to allow to the Germans of Schleswig the free use of their language and the free exercise of their religion. By administrative measures and much petty chicanery in their execution, and by flooding the duchies with Danish officials, a systematic attempt had been made to eradicate German influence. Even when urged by so partial a friend as the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Russell, to do its utmost to satisfy the legitimate expectations of the German Powers, and above all to abandon any attempt to incorporate Schleswig in the Danish monarchy, the Danish Government remained obstinate. At a later stage of the dispute, Russell argued with the Berlin Cabinet that while Denmark's under takings in regard to Schleswig and Holstein might have induced Prussia and Austria to enter the treaty of 1852, her failure to discharge these undertakings did not invalidate the treaty or justify the two Powers in wishing to evade it. *Prima facie*, that seemed a reasonable contention, though at least there was something to be said on the other side.

On November 15th the King who had thrown this apple of discord into the midst of the European Powers died, and with his death the male line of his dynasty became extinct. The dispute over the duchies now took a new aspect; to the question of constitutional rights was added the still more thorny question of succession. Prince Christian of Glücksburg was duly proclaimed King of the Danish monarchy, inclusive of the duchies, as Christian IX. Although this was in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of London, his succession in the duchies was at once disputed by Prince Frederick of Augustenburg (in whose favour his father to this end renounced all claims – the claims of which he had been bought out in 1852), who, as "the first-born prince of the next line of the Oldenburg house," issued a proclamation saying that as Duke Frederick VIII he "entered upon the government of the duchies, and therewith all rights and duties" belonging thereto.

Of the German Sovereigns, Duke Ernest of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha was

the first to recognize the new claimant, and it was at his capital, Coburg, that Prince Frederick provisionally established himself and formed a Ministry. The rulers of other States, among them Bavaria, Saxony and Hesse, similarly took his side, and German public opinion was almost wholly in his favour. The National Association promptly began an active agitation on his behalf, and a national congress, meeting at Frankfort, declared for him. The duchies themselves likewise supported the Prince. Popular meetings were held, organizations were formed for his support, and collections of money were made for the purpose of defending the rights of the duchies against Denmark. A large part of the officers of Holstein refused to take the oath to the Danish King, and, meeting at Kiel, together with the knights of the duchies, adopted for presentation to the Federal Diet a petition affirming the rights of Duke Frederick and calling upon that body to protect them. To add to the general unsettlement, it was now that Napoleon judged the time opportune for declaring (November5th 5th) that he no longer regarded the treaties of 1815 as binding and for proposing a conference of the Powers for the purpose of setting the entire European house in order. Bismarck, on Prussia's behalf, accepted the proposal, not because he wanted a conference, but because he wanted Napoleon's favour. Great Britain refused to take part, and as the rest of the Powers hung back, Austria in particular fearing the reopening of the Italian question, the idea had to be abandoned.

King Christian had meanwhile declared Schleswig a part of Denmark, and Russia, France, and England seemed disposed to support him. Everything now depended upon the action taken by the two leading States of Germany. Austria was a strong partisan of the Prince of Augustenburg. It was obviously to her interest that the duchies, if they were no longer to be attached to Denmark, should in no circumstances pass to Prussia, and the surest way of preventing this was to take a leading part in the adjustment of the dispute. The King of Prussia, for his part, was quite ready to co-operate with Austria, convinced that such joint action would prevent the question of the duchies from becoming a German concern, in which all the States might claim to be consulted, and would be likely to conciliate European opinion.

On October 1st the Frankfort Diet had threatened federal

execution against the royal and ducal ruler of Schleswig-Holstein in the event of his refusal within three weeks to restore the constitutional *status quo*, and as its warning was disregarded, it proceeded on December 7th to give effect to this ultima ratio against refractory members of the Federation. Accordingly, a body of Saxon and Hanoverian troops, 12,000 in number, occupied Holstein, while an Austrian and Prussian force held itself in readiness on the German frontier. No immediate hostilities took place, for the Danes withdrew their army into Schleswig, whereupon the Prince of Augustenburg appeared in Kiel and set up what his patron and relative the Duke of Coburg called a, "sort of Government," two at least of whose members were lent by that ruler.

Prussia and Austria now endeavoured to persuade the Diet to interfere similarly on the question of Schleswig. On its refusal on the ground of non-competence (January 14, 1864), the allies declared that they would take action on their own account, justifying this attitude by their special position as derived from the treaties of 1850 and 1852 and the rights which they had defended against Danish aggression. Before this (December 24th) the British Government had demanded that the federal troops should confine their action to Holstein, intimating that any extension of operations to Schleswig would make difficult the continued neutrality of Great Britain, and had made formal proposals to the Powers for a conference, to be held either in Paris or London.

Once more the European Governments had to reconcile themselves to the fact that a new spirit directed affairs in Berlin and that Prussia was no longer the Prussia of 1852. Besides, the dispute had gone too far for conferences. Bismarck would not listen to the idea unless Denmark agreed first to restore the *status quo* by annulling the constitution of November 18, 1863, and when this condition was rejected he was not sorry. He had Austria on his side, and he was confident of attaining his end by her co-operation. "In 1849," he said, " Prussia stood alone against four Great Powers. Now there are two against three – that is a better hand." The French Emperor, still sore that his own proposal of a conference had come to nought, was likewise lukewarm, on the ground that to interfere in a sense unfriendly to Germany would show antagonism to the cause of nationality. Later he told Lord Clarendon that if he did intervene he

would be prepared to back up his arguments by force and that the price would be the liberation of Venetia and perhaps "something on the Rhine."

At a Council of State held shortly after the death of the Danish Sovereign, Bismarck reminded the King that each of his immediate predecessors, as far back as the Great Elector, had made an addition to Prussian territory, and suggested that his opportunity for doing likewise had now come. "While I spoke," he has written, "the Crown Prince lifted his hands to heaven as though he doubted my sanity; my colleagues kept silence." Nevertheless, never were wild words more soberly spoken. There can be little doubt that even then his plans for the future were definitely formed. In their subsequent joint action Austria and Prussia seemed to have buried the hatchet, yet if they worked harmoniously their motives and ends were alike different.

Rechberg, the Austrian Foreign Secretary, had no other idea in view than the restoration to the duchies of their rights and their settlement under Augustenburg, and, these objects accomplished, he expected that the question would be closed and the allies leave the country. To Bismarck Austrian co- operation was welcome for its own sake, since it placed the two Powers for the first time in a position of parity in German affairs; but already his true objective was to bring Denmark, by hook or crook, to blows, with a view to wresting from her the duchies which were recognized to be hers by the treaty of 1852.

Of this treaty he had said in the Prussian Lower Chamber just before (December 1, 1865): "The signing of the treaty may be a matter for regret, but as it has been signed, honour and wisdom both require that no doubt should be entertained of our faithful regard for treaty obligations." Nevertheless, he took care to add that Denmark must be held bound by the same considerations, and that if her King failed to fulfil his duties under one agreement he could not expect to retain his rights under another. The ulterior and secret purpose of his policy even at this time was avowed only at a later date. Speaking in the same Chamber on December 20, 1866, he confessed that while the personal union of the duchies with Denmark would have been preferable to their formal incorporation in that kingdom, and an independent principality better than personal union, he had always regarded annexation to Prussia as the best solution of all and the one

to be aimed at. “Only the event,” he then said, “could show which of these solutions would be attainable. Had personal union been the maximum attainable, I should not have been justified in Germany’s interest, in the then condition of affairs, in rejecting such *a payment on account*.”

Difficulties arose with the Prussian Diet immediately it was asked to vote money for military measures. The Lower House was willing that Prussia should fight to win the duchies for the Prince of Augustenburg, but so little did it as yet divine Bismarck’s intentions that it was fully persuaded that he was working for their retention under Danish rule. Accordingly, it flatly refused a vote, and with a new-born passion for the rights of Sovereigns, the democratic party, whose motto hitherto had been “not crowns and thrones but men,” proposed a resolution declaring that “the honour and interest of Germany” required that all German States should protect the rights of the duchies, should acknowledge the Prince of Augustenburg as the reigning Duke, and should afford him effective support in the assertion of his rights. The resolution was adopted (December 2, 1863) by a large majority after a debate, in which the historian Heinrich von Sybel, afterwards the loyal apologist of Bismarck’s statecraft, had declared that “the people of Schleswig-Holstein do not want to be Prussian. Let me say that with the fullest knowledge of the facts.”

A fortnight later the Diet emphasized this attitude by presenting an address to the Crown affirming its conviction that any money placed at the disposal of the existing Government would not be employed to the best interests of Prussia or Germany, and calling upon the King to withdraw from the Treaty of London, to acknowledge the Prince of Augustenburg forthwith as the rightful Duke of Schleswig and Holstein, and to take steps in the Federal Diet to enforce his rights by practical measures. It would appear that the King himself at this stage of the dispute sympathized with this view. Not only had he on December 1st bidden his Minister, when speaking in the Diet, not to oppose the idea of an independent Holstein, since he was not himself averse to it, but while he received the Chamber’s address with a refusal and a reminder that the direction of foreign affairs was his concern, he wrote to Bismarck (December 17th): “The worst is that it (the Chamber) wishes what I also wish in my heart yet cannot say

frankly to the House."

Bismarck, quick to seize an advantage, saw in the Diet's attitude another attempt to usurp rights which were not conceded to it by the constitution. If the claim of the Diet to exclusive control of finance was unwarranted, much more this new pretension to control the Executive in relation to questions of peace and war, for here it had not even a participatory voice. "It is a question," said Bismarck on January 22nd in the Lower House, "of a struggle between the house of Hohenzollern and the House of Deputies for the rule of Prussia. According to the constitution, the rights over peace and war, the right to choose his Ministers, and the entire executive power belong to the King. You, on the other hand, claim that in foreign affairs the King shall follow not his own intentions but yours, and that even in the choice of the measures necessary to protect the rights and the honour of the country he shall adopt your ideas; in plain language, you wish to make the right of the Crown in regard to questions of peace and war dependent upon your vote. . . . You claim that the King shall at your bidding wage a war of conquest in order to win Schleswig for the Duke of Augustenburg."

It was a curious situation – the democratic Chamber inciting a militarist Government to undertake against its will a war of aggression for objects which were not directly Prussian. For so the Liberals at that time interpreted Bismarck's plans. Unable to squeeze money out of the Diet, the Government obtained it by renewing railway concessions.

The allied armies, the Prussian under Prince Frederick Charles and the Austrian under General von Gablenz, with Wrangel as commander-in-chief, entered Holstein on January 21st and Schleswig on February 1st, and war began in earnest. The Danes promptly appealed for help to France, Russia, Great Britain, and Sweden, but none was forthcoming. In the circumstances the campaign, though vigorous, was short; the decisive blow was given by the battle and capture of the forts of Düppel (April 18th), a gallant feat performed by the Prussians without the help of their allies. Denmark fought resolutely and bravely, but she had to contend against unequal odds, for Prussia and Austria between them had at disposal about 60,000 men wherewith to meet a force one-third smaller; and, moreover, the Prussians were armed with the deadly Dreyse needle-gun.

Before this time the Crown Prince had begun to suspect that his

father's Minister was playing a dark game. For him the question was not so much a Prussian as a German question. He sympathized heartily with the wish of the duchies for an independent political existence apart from Denmark, and favoured the claim of the Prince of Augustenburg. Through him the Prince in February, and again in April, made proposals pledging himself to be all but a vassal of Prussia if only the King would help him to the disputed throne: he would enter into a military and naval convention under which his troops would be subject to the King's supreme command, would join the Customs Union, give to Prussia a naval station in Holstein, and allow her to garrison Rendsburg and to build the long- contemplated North-Baltic Sea Canal. Pressed to regard favourably these proposals, Bismarck took refuge in the plea that Prussia must "act according to circumstances." The reservation seemed to justify the Crown Prince's worst suspicions. In a letter of April 17th he imputed to Bismarck "secret ideas of a Prussian policy of expansion," and added: "I will only state briefly that my opinion is that the prosecution of them would entirely falsify our whole German policy, and would probably place us in all unenviable position before Europe. It would not be the first time that Prussia had tried to be better than everybody else, only finally to fall between two stools."

Already, indeed, Bismarck had sounded Louis Napoleon as to the conditions upon which he would be prepared to support Prussia in the annexation of the duchies, though the King had not been won over to the idea, and viewed with grave apprehension the risks involved. "The plan," he wrote to his Minister on April 16th, "will create a general coalition against us, since it will drive the secondary States into the Austrian camp, for in this policy of annexation they will see their nightmare for fifty years realized for the first time, and will regard it as an earnest of their own fate. Austria, Germany, England, and Russia would be sure to be against us, and we should be alone, bound only to the hereditary enemy and its inscrutable leader. That is more than dangerous."

Peace negotiations were opened at a conference which met in London at the end of April, under the presidency of Lord Russell, the belligerents assenting to an armistice for a month, dating from May 12th. Prussia and Austria had agreed to take part without binding themselves in any way, and one of their first acts was to give formal

notice of withdrawal from the Treaty of 1852. That done, they joined in the proposal that the duchies should henceforth form a separate State, independent of Denmark, under the sovereignty of the hereditary Prince of Augustenburg. The Danish delegates refused the unconditional cession of both duchies, but were willing to accept the reasonable compromise, proposed by Great Britain, that Denmark should retain the northern part of Schleswig, with the river Schley as the boundary. Austria and Prussia in turn rejected this alternative, but were prepared to submit the frontier question to friendly mediation. Denmark refused to make ally further concession, however, and particularly rejected the proposal of the French plenipotentiary, of which the author was Napoleon himself, that the inhabitants of North Schleswig should decide upon their future nationality by *plébiscite*. The result of the deadlock was that the conference separated in June without accomplishing any practical result. Lord Clarendon summarized the position in a remark made to the Prussian plenipotentiaries: "You entered the conference as masters of the situation and you have left it as masters of the situation." Nevertheless, he believed that Prussia's success was diplomatic only, and would not last.

Relying still upon the sympathy of friendly States, which hitherto had failed to materialize, the Danes again took up arms (June 26th). It was only a flash in the pan, however, for three days later they were decisively beaten at Alsen (June 29th), and their capitulation was now unconditional. A truce was signed on August 1st, and was followed on October 30th by the Peace of Vienna, under which the King of Denmark formally ceded the three duchies of Schleswig, Holstein, and Lauenburg to Austria and Prussia without condition, binding himself to acknowledge whatever disposition of these territories the allies might decide upon. "I rejoice sincerely," the Prussian Crown Prince wrote to Bismarck a little later (November 18th), "that peace is at last ratified, and that the duchies, emancipated for ever, will henceforth form an independent part of the Germanic' Federation. May the most legitimate of the claimants now be instituted in his legal inheritance as Duke, and the affair be thus brought to a worthy conclusion!" It was still, however, Bismarck's intention to "act according to circumstances." It was not without a calculated design that he had with Austria's acquiescence resolutely opposed the wish of the

secondary States that the Federation and its Diet should be allowed to take part in the settlement.

The part played by Great Britain throughout the Danish dispute – resolute in words, indomitable in despatches, but halting and timorous in deeds – was not one that could be recalled by her in later years with special pride. Not only did the British Government follow a policy of captious meddlesomeness, but it meddled without any serious intention of supporting its brave diplomatic protestations by any measure of force. Lord Russell's right hand had done valiantly, but its weapon had not been the sword of Gideon but the pen of the ready writer. Having done her best to encourage Denmark to stand firm, no sooner did it become evident that a war over the duchies could not be fought with paper bullets than Great Britain withdrew into the background and allowed the little country to carry on the struggle alone and succumb in the effort. As late as June 17th, Russell declared in the House of Lords: "Her Majesty's fleet is ready for any service which it may be called on to render." The vain boast meant nothing and achieved nothing; the roaring on this occasion was not that of the British lion but of Snug the joiner. Not without justification did Lord Derby accuse Russell at the time of having followed a policy of "meddle and muddle." Yet the blame was not wholly or primarily that of the British Foreign Secretary. An even larger share fell to the impetuosity of the Prime Minister, Lord Palmerston, and to his refusal to accommodate himself to an entirely new situation in European affairs. Criticizing in the House of Commons in 1850 Palmerston's propensity for interfering in the concerns of other nations, Sir Robert Peel had bidden him "beware that the time does not arrive when, frightened by your own interference, you withdraw your countenance from those whom you have excited, and leave upon their mind the bitter recollection that you have betrayed them." That was the exact position in 1864.

Contrary to tradition, the Tories of that day, aided by the Manchester Liberals, showed themselves better friends of Germany and the German cause than the Liberals. Disraeli, of whom Count Vitzthum, the Saxon envoy, was a busy though not altogether successful prompter in German affairs, had opposed the Foreign Secretary's blundering policy at every step, and on July 4th he scored a legitimate if not a virtuous triumph when he won a large part of the

House of Commons – 295 votes against 313 – for his vote of censure on the Government for having "failed to maintain their avowed policy of upholding the independence and integrity of Denmark, lowered the just influence of this country in the councils of Europe, and thereby diminished the securities for peace." The Government saved itself from defeat, though only as by fire, for taunts of weakness and cowardice showered upon Ministers from both sides of the House. It was only Palmerston's personal popularity and his still overshadowing prestige that prevented the rout of Liberalism at that time. Nevertheless, the soberer judgment of the nation was not that England should have gone to war, but that she should have minded her own business.

At the conclusion of the Danish war the Prussian Government sought to bring the constitutional conflict to a close by acknowledging the budget rights of the Diet to the full, and seeking sanction for the expenditure which had been incurred irregularly. All Bismarck asked in return was that the army reorganization scheme should be completed and that the House of Deputies should vote the money necessary for that purpose. A large section of the House was eager for peace on these terms, but the majority were not satisfied with an offer of repentance on conditions, and in proof of good faith demanded the abandonment of certain features of the army scheme to which they had never assented. As the King would not accept indemnity on these terms, the "conflict" – which was now in truth a conflict only in name – continued.

After the Peace of Vienna, Denmark disappeared from the drama of the Elbe duchies, and the stage was henceforth monopolized by two principal actors. The allies having wrested the territories from their vanquished opponent as a legitimate prize of victory, the question of their disposal now arose. However obscure his actions may hitherto have been, there was no longer any doubt as to the reason for Bismarck's refusal to fight the battle of the duchies in the name and for the sake of the Prince of Augustenburg. To have done so would have been to call in question the title of the King of Denmark, and that was no part of his deeply-laid calculations. Hitherto he had justified the Danish title by the declaration of the Treaty of London. His true reason for insisting on it, in opposition to the whole tenour of Prussian diplomacy under Frederick William IV, now became plain;

for if the King of Denmark had no claim to the duchies he was obviously unable to give them away. If Prussia was to be able to establish a justifiable claim to the reversion of one or both of these territories, the title-deeds must come from the hands of the legitimate owner, and the owner, by the assent of the European Powers, was King Christian. Would the headstrong House of Deputies now confess its blundering obstinacy in urging him, with gibe and threat, to waste Prussian life and treasure in thrashing Denmark for the sake of the Augustenburg? Would it still demand that the duchies, lawfully transferred by sign and seal into the hands of Prussia and Austria, should be constituted an independent State under a new Sovereign – a new ally for Austria in the Diet, and a new centre of particularism and intrigue to be added to the thirty which existed already, every one of them a practical argument against unity? He might not have been sure as yet that it would be possible to secure the duchies for Prussia, but he was determined to make the attempt.

In pursuing this design Bismarck had against him, as he said later, "not only the Austrians, the English, the Liberal and non-Liberal small States, the Opposition in the Prussian Diet, influential people at Court, and a majority of the newspapers," but the entire royal family – the King, the Queen, and the Crown Prince and Princess – all of whom, while sharing his view of the necessity of protecting the liberties of the duchies, were agreed in seeking for Prussia no immediate advantage, believing that the frank renunciation of political interest would be amply compensated for by gain in moral influence. For Bismarck, however, moral and material values were incompatibles and subject to different equations, and he never set one against the other. When, on August 22nd, the Prussian and Austrian rulers, with their Foreign Ministers, discussed the question at Schönbrunn, he had listened with dismay to the King's frank confession that "he had no right to the duchies and therefore could make no claim to them." On that occasion he had endeavoured to persuade the Emperor to withdraw from the affair altogether and leave Prussia in possession, assuring him that if Lombardy had been the stake, Prussia would have been equally accommodating, but no agreement was reached.

So well did Bismarck keep his secret, that up to this point some of his nearest official associates had not divined his ultimate aim. Roon, the Minister of War, was in the dark, and Bernstorff, the ambassador

in London, had gone through the London conference without a suspicion that annexation was contemplated. “The less the Government gives the impression of wishing to obtain territory,” Bernstorff wrote home in May, “the stronger will be the position of Prussia abroad and in Germany. . . . The frank explanation that Prussia merely desires to secure the complete independence of that German territory, and its indissoluble union with Germany (’under the sceptre of some German prince’) must make a tremendous impression in Europe.”

Clear in his own mind what the ultimate fate of the duchies should be, Bismarck had now so to influence the development of events as to make the desirable become inevitable and so attain his goal. The more the suspicion that Bismarck was working for annexation seemed to be justified, the more Rechberg identified himself with the Prince of Augustenburg and urged upon Prussia his recognition as an independent ruler, with a view to the termination of the *condominium*. To this pressure Bismarck replied, with aggravating *sang-froid*, that there was no hurry, knowing that Prussia had everything to gain by delay, and that the longer he could defer a settlement the more likely was it to be one on Prussia’s terms. For Austria the duchies were a shoe that pinched, and she anxiously sought relief. Owing to their situation there could be no question of her retention of either of them, and even had not distance been an objection the nationality and religion of the inhabitants would have offered an insuperable objection. Accordingly, Austria tried to sell out her interest in the duchies, and therein played the first bad move in a game of wits in which she hardly once showed to advantage. If Prussia were given a free hand in the duchies, would the King cede a slice of Silesia in return, or even guarantee to Austria the retention of her remaining Italian possessions? Bismarck declined, knowing that as Austria would have to abandon the duchies sooner or later, whether she wished or not, any such chaffering was unnecessary.

A change of Ministers took place at Vienna about this time, without, however, entailing a change of policy. The failure of Count Rechberg to secure the retention in the revised commercial treaty between Austria and the Customs Union of the article stipulating that negotiations for the admission of Aus tria into the Union should be opened at a later date had created great disappointment, and

accentuated the incompatibility between him and Schmerling. The result was that both Ministers resigned simultaneously, with a view to the Emperor choosing between them, and Rechberg was allowed to go (October 27, 1864). The strong anti-Prussian party welcomed Rechberg's fall, and regarded it, albeit prematurely, as an intimation to Prussia that Austria's past policy of conciliation on the duchy question was to be abandoned. Rechberg's unconcealed desire to work harmoniously with Prussia on all questions had made him many enemies at home, who viewed each of his attempts in that direction as a needless concession and a sign of weakness. It was not his fault that the rivals had, nevertheless, drifted more and more apart. Bismarck, who as a rule judged his contemporaries severely, speaks of this opponent as "an irascible though honourable man."

On the advice of the outgoing Minister, Count von Mensdorff-Pouilly was appointed his successor. Mensdorff, then Governor of Galicia, stood high in the Emperor's favour, though the choice of him may have been determined in part by the fact that he had acted as the Austrian commissioner in Holstein during the settlement following the Danish war of 1848, and had thus acquired a special knowledge of the local bearings of a complicated problem. Contrary to the hopes of the reactionary party, the new Foreign Minister showed every disposition to emulate the spirit of his predecessor. Mensdorff was a man of fine feeling and dignified character, sincere and straightforward in all his public actions, but perhaps fitter for the diplomacy of half a century later than that of his day and of the man with whom he had to deal.

Like Rechberg, he was determined not to allow Prussia an entirely free hand in the duchies; like him, he wished to see the Prince of Augustenburg seated on the vacant throne. He was even more outspoken than Rechberg in identifying Austria with the Prince's candidature. Nevertheless, he confidently hoped for an amicable settlement of the dispute. As he wrote to his relative the Duke of Coburg later in the year, it was his intention "to do all he could to prevent the German rent from widening." Not only so, but for a time he was strong enough, with the Emperor's support, to hold in check the forces which were deliberately working against a policy of conciliation. Of these forces the most powerful spokesman was Baron von Biegeleben, a Hesse-Darmstadter who, like the Saxon Beust at a later date, entered the service of Austria carrying with him a more

than Austrian antipathy against Prussia, a qualification the more dangerous inasmuch as he exercised considerable influence upon the German policy of the Foreign Office.

Mensdorff signalized his entrance into office by a powerful appeal to the good-will of Prussia. In a series of despatches of November 12th, he reaffirmed the "attachment of the Austrian to the Prussian reigning house," and on the Emperor's behalf begged the King, in the interest of peace and the preservation of the old alliance, to emulate him in "the virtue of renunciation." Discussing the several possibilities of settling the dispute, he rejected first the idea of annexation by Prussia as a probable cause of offence to all Germany, whose interest in the duchies would be rudely ignored and overridden by such a measure. Not more acceptable was the idea of the duchies becoming dependent and parasitic, for the federal law recognized only independence and equality between the allies. The only satisfactory solution remaining was to convert the duchies into a sovereign federal State with the full rights of one. If, however, the duchies were not to be divided, the question arose, Under whose rule should their independence be established? The choice, it was pointed out, lay between the Prince of Augustenburg and the Grand Duke of Oldenburg, and of these possible regents Austria regarded the former as having the stronger title. The Emperor's Government, therefore, proposed that they should both give an earnest of pacific intentions by installing the hereditary Prince Frederick in complete possession of the duchies without delay.

While this was the view officially put before the Prussian Cabinet, the Austrian Minister in Berlin, Count Karolyi, was authorized to make an alternative proposal. It was the old idea of territorial compensation; although Austria heartily disliked the prospect of a Prussian annexation of the duchies, she would agree provided she received an equivalent elsewhere, which meant in Silesia.

Neither proposal made any impression on Bismarck. The appeal to "the virtue of renunciation" in particular did not attract him, and he refused to recognize any rights of succession, whether on the part of the Prince of Augustenburg or the Grand Duke of Oldenburg. From the first he had consistently taken his stand on the Treaty of London, which affirmed the title of the King of Denmark. But the King having, as rightful ruler, formally surrendered the duchies, the title by which

they were now held could not be open to question. He even hinted that if Austria pressed the claims of her favourite too far a claim might be advanced on behalf of the house of Brandenburg, in virtue of ancient dynastic ties.

In the meantime the German population of the duchies was beginning to reconcile itself to the evident fact that the question of its future government, for which it had struggled with Denmark in two wars, was to be decided over its head. The noble families (*Ritterschaft*) were on the whole in favour of annexation to Prussia; people with a material stake in the country were already asking themselves whether Augustenburg rule or Hohenzollern rule would be the cheaper, and what there was to choose between them; and amongst the masses in general, conscious of their helplessness, a spirit of apathy was spreading. When the year 1865 opened, the Prince of Augustenburg knew that he had lost the game; his "Government of a sort" at Kiel still continued in name, though preparations were quietly being made for winding up its affairs, and official documents were being removed to secret places. Privy Councillor Samwer, the Prince's adviser and propagandist-in-chief, who had been lent for that purpose by the Duke of Coburg, wrote to Gotha in December that annexation seemed inevitable, and that if Prussia was bent upon it nothing could be done to prevent it: his only hope was that the King was opposed to it. Napoleon himself was now believed to favour this measure, subject only to ratification by a vote of the population.

For month after month the two Governments continued to engage in barren negotiations. Occasionally they seemed to draw near to an understanding, but always some new qualification was imposed by one side or some new concession demanded by the other, just in time to prevent agreement. Early in the year Bismarck had asked the military and naval authorities to say what were the minimum demands which Prussia should put forward in the event of the idea of annexation being abandoned as impracticable. The answer was that Prussia must have supreme control of the army and navy of the duchies, both in regard to organization and administration, and must have full possession of Kiel, Friedrichsort, and Sonderburg- Düppel, as well as the right to garrison Rendsburg. To these claims the Minister of Commerce added the demand that Prussia should be free to build and work the long-projected North- Baltic Sea Canal and to fortify

each entrance; that Schleswig and Holstein should join the German Customs Union; and that their customs, post and telegraph systems should be assimilated to those of Prussia and the administration of these be exercised by that State. It might seem as though for a moment Bismarck was willing to give up the duchies on these conditions, and at least he notified Austria to that effect. No sooner had word been sent, however, than he recanted, advancing supplementary demands the effect of which was to make the offer nugatory and to Austria unacceptable. Now it was stipulated that the entire military law of Prussia should be introduced into the duchies, that the soldiers and sailors should be called up by Prussian officials, should take the oath of obedience to the King of Prussia, and should even be liable to serve in Prussian garrisons.

This was the "February programme" (February 22, 1865), which may be regarded as the only serious Prussian offer of compromise. It was evident, however, that if the duchies were to be held subject to these conditions Prussia's essential object would have been secured; their independence would have been destroyed; and every vestige of sovereign right having disappeared, they would have become in effect vassal provinces of Prussia. In Vienna every one, from the Emperor downward, regarded the Prussian demands as unconscionable. The overbearing Biegeleben expressed the general sentiment of the Foreign Office in the words "I would rather grow potatoes than be a ruling Prince under such conditions." In its reply of March 5th the Austrian Government intimated its willingness to assign to Prussia advantages proportionate to the sacrifices which she had made; she might have Kiel and build the desired canal, garrison Rendsburg as a federal fortress, and require the duchies to join the Customs Union; but, objecting that the further demands would have the effect of making the new Sovereign a mere puppet and the duchies an appanage of their powerful neighbour, it rejected them, and made the counter-proposal that the independence of the duchies should be reestablished.

While professing to seek a peaceful solution of the difficulty, Bismarck was nevertheless busily preparing for the more probable eventuality of war. He was again sounding Napoleon, through the Prussian envoy in Paris, Count von der Goltz, and through the French ambassador in Berlin, Count Benedetti, as to his attitude in the event of Prussia and Austria coming into collision. He was less wishful than

before for a formal alliance with France, but he still regarded the Emperor's good-will as for the time a valuable asset. His idea was to play off France against Austria, using the friendship of the one as a means of obtaining better terms from the other. Great, therefore, was his relief when he was assured that Napoleon seemed to approve of the idea of Prussia's annexation of the duchies.

How deliberate Bismarck was in the double game which he was playing appears from a letter written to Count von der Goltz about this time (February 20, 1865). "I do not regard the Austrian alliance as used up," he said, "and I believe that we can do better business by keeping Vienna in suspense between hope of our assistance and fear of our going over to Austria's enemy (France) than by compelling Austria needlessly to prepare for an irrevocable breach with us. It appears to me more politic to continue the existing wedlock in spite of little jars, and if divorce should really be necessary, to accept the facts just as we may find them, than to break the tie in face of all the disadvantages of indubitable perfidy without the certainty of experiencing later better conditions as a result of a new union."

That he nevertheless then believed the issue of the dispute to be near is shown by the following words in the same letter:

"His Majesty's policy has a strong support, firstly, in the fact that, thanks to circumstances, we are in possession of the duchies in a larger measure than Austria, and in virtue of such possession are creating ever-increasing securities for its continuance; and secondly, in our determination not to leave the country unless we are satisfied or are driven out by force. No Power would lightly enter upon war of attack for the purpose of ejecting us. We know definitely what we want – annexation, if it is to be had without war, or if other causes bring about war before the decision to annex is taken; but in any event a relationship (to the duchies) which will place in our hands the fortresses and naval harbour and the disposal of the armed forces and other rights in the duchies. To go to war with European Great Powers for the difference between these two solutions (that is, unconditional annexation or such a condition of dependence as would give to Prussia the substance of possession) does not appear to me a step proportionate to the value of the object to be attained. Rather, however, than reduce our claims below those advanced in the second solution, we would draw the sword, sure of the complete sympathy of

the country."

For the confidence of the closing words there seemed to be justification. By this time the opposition to annexation had almost died down in Prussia. Even the Liberals had begun to repent and forget the chivalrous indignation with which they had received the Minister-President's first open confession that the duchies had not been seized as a prize of war for the ulterior purpose of creating a new German princeling.

As yet no suspicion existed in Vienna that the dispute was not capable of a pacific adjustment. "The affair will not be settled without irritation on Prussia's part," Mensdorff wrote to the Duke of Coburg on March 27th, "but we have by no means blocked the way, and we count on the same attitude in Berlin as soon as quiet deliberation regains the upper hand." Austria in the meantime had succeeded in winning for her solution of the difficulty the States usually hostile to her rival, and on March 19th Bavaria, Saxony, and grand-ducal Hesse, with her concurrence, gave notice in the Diet of a resolution recommending the provisional recognition of the Prince of Augustenburg's claim to the succession. Prussia answered this challenge by removing the naval station of Danzig to Kiel (March 24th), in sign that, whatever the Diet might do or not do, she had no intention of leaving. The resolution of the secondary States was duly carried on April 6th, after Austria had declared her readiness to abandon her rights in the duchies provided Prussia would do the same. Prussia refused, and emphasized her attitude by pushing forward with the naval works at Kiel, while Roon, the Minister for War, declared in the Lower House of the Diet, in introducing a Navy Bill, that Prussia would never relinquish that port. When Austria protested against Prussia's action, Bismarck replied maliciously that if, owing to geographical reasons, she was unable to use Kiel for naval purposes, it was inconsiderate to grudge Prussia the opportunity.

On May 29th the dispute, now become critical, was submitted to a Council of State held in Berlin under the presidency of the King. Bismarck put forward three possible solutions. The first was that Prussia should be content with the programme of February 22nd, which he believed might be obtained by peaceable means, subject to the abandonment of the demand that the troops of the duchies should be embodied in the King's army and take the oath to him. The second

solution was the annexation of both duchies subject to compensation to Austria, though he pointed out that this solution was blocked by the difficulty that Austria would insist on compensation in territory, and Prussia had no territory to offer. The third solution was to annex outright without compensation at all, a step which meant war. His view was that while war with Austria was inevitable sooner or later, it was not to be recommended at that moment. Of the other Ministers, some, and notably Bodelschwingh, were for peaceable, but most were for forcible, action. The only voice which was raised emphatically against war was that of the Crown Prince, who warned the Ministry against the danger of annexation and of a war which would be sheer fratricide, and favoured the recognition of the Prince of Augustenburg, subject to his acceptance of the February conditions. Perplexed by this diversity of counsels, the King was unable to make up his mind. Fidelity to the Austrian alliance and personal attachment to the Emperor disposed him against war, and apart from these scruples there was the risk of failure to be reckoned with. Turning to Moltke, he asked, What did the army think? Moltke counselled annexation, adding that even if it led to war the reward would be worth the price. The answer was not th one which the King hoped to receive; he remained still unconvinced, and the Council broke up without any decision being arrived at.

On June 24th Austria took a further step forward on the path of conciliation. Now she would be willing to concede to Prussia a naval port (i.e. Kiel), and the occupation of a federal fortress, provided that if Prussia garrisoned Rendsburg, in Schleswig, Austria should garrison Rastatt, in Baden, and that if Prussia sought territory beyond Kiel harbour, Austria should receive as compensation either the little State of Hohenzollern or certain frontier districts of Silesia. The military organization of the duchies was to be left an open question for the Federal Diet to decide, while Prussia was to be allowed to arrange with the new ruler such matters as the building of the Kiel Canal and the commercial relationships of the duchies with the rest of Germany. Influenced by the King's evident unwillingness to be pushed to extremes, Bismarck seemed for a time to regard these proposals as a fair attempt to meet him at least half-way, and on July 3rd he went so far as to say that the only outstanding question was the choice of the new Regent; if Austria would accept the Grand Duke of Oldenburg,

matters might be arranged. Upon the question of succession, however, Austria was not prepared to give way.

About this time Bismarck's opposition to the Augustenburg claims received support in an opinion pronounced by the Prussian Crown Syndicate, to which he had referred the legal aspects of the succession question in the preceding December. A learned and weighty body, consisting of chosen judges and jurists, high administrative officials and professors, the Syndicate was yet a tribunal which, owing to its composition and purpose, was hardly likely to be coldly impartial on such a subject, since it was a Prussian institution and existed in order to advise on questions affecting the interests of the Prussian Crown. The president, the jurist August Wilhelm Heffter, came to the conclusion that the claims of Brandenburg were posterior to those of the house of Oldenburg. It was more to the point that a majority of his colleagues advised that King Christian IX of Denmark was the lawful heir and successor to the three duchies, yet inasmuch as he had by the peace of October 30, 1864, surrendered his rights to the Prussian and Austrian crowns the allies were under no obligation to consider any other claims. In order to emphasize the latter point, they pronounced unreservedly against the pretensions of the Prince of Augustenburg. Nevertheless, the effect of this timely judgment was weakened by the fact that the legal faculties of sixteen German universities had already acknowledged the Prince's claims to be valid.

Meanwhile, Prussia was quietly preparing for war. Asked to state the country's military resources, Roon assured Bismarck on July 9th that he could if necessary put 250,000 into Bohemia and leave 40,000 to operate in West Germany, besides 200,000 reserves for the manning of the fortresses and all other purposes. He added that the munition factories were working day and night and that the army would be ready the moment it was called upon.

The situation was not improved by the persistent agitation which was being carried on in Holstein by the Prince of Augustenburg and his friends with Austrian connivance. The agitation was regarded not only as an insult to Prussia but as a personal affront to the King, since the Prince was a Prussian subject and a military officer. Accordingly, the King wrote on June 3rd to the Emperor begging him to order the Prince's expulsion from the duchy. Before the reply came, Bismarck, meeting the French ambassador to Austria, the Due de Gramont, at

Carlsbad, authorized him on his return to Vienna to tell the Foreign Minister there that while Prussia did not want war it would assuredly ensue unless Austria at once altered her attitude on the Schleswig-Holstein question. On July 21st an ultimatum was sent to Vienna in which Prussia notified her refusal to negotiate further regarding the future of the duchies until the Augustenburg agitation had been suppressed; when this had been done she would be willing to consider the recognition of the Grand Duke of Oldenburg, subject to the February conditions. If, however, Austria refused to help to restore tranquillity in the duchies, Prussia would do it alone.

While the issue of peace and war thus hung in the balance, a proposal of compromise, originating with the Austrian envoy to Bavaria, Count Blome, appeared for a moment to clear the air. It was the application to the duchies of the principle of "spheres of interest" which was to play so important a part in later international diplomacy. Prussia was to have Schleswig and Austria Holstein. Although honestly preferring an independent State under the Prince of Augustenburg, the Emperor agreed to the submission of the proposal to the King of Prussia as an alternative solution. Blome accordingly waited on the King at Gastein (July 26th), and, to his delight, the idea of partition was favourably received. Even Bismarck admitted that it might be acceptable provided only that in addition to the full possession of Schleswig Prussia acquired the special rights which she had already claimed. On August 7th the Emperor himself wrote to the King formally endorsing the plan. True, the prospect of solving the succession dispute in so sordid a fashion troubled his conscience, for throughout all the negotiations he had insisted upon "the virtue of renunciation," but he reflected: "What misfortune we should create and what offence we should give to the world if we two, the son of Frederick William III and the grandson of the Emperor Francis, were to turn from being friends and allies into enemies!"

While the Sovereigns were thus exchanging conciliatory letters, Bismarck had not ceased to mature his own plans. It is certain that at this time he was counting definitely on war, and devising means for bringing it about decently. On August 1st he wrote to the King words which show plainly the lines upon which he was working. "I am dominated," he said, "by the impression that your Majesty would enter on a war with Austria with other feelings and in a freer spirit if

the necessity thereto arises out of the nature of things and out of monarchical duties." To Count Usedom, the Prussian ambassador to the Italian Court, who had been charged with the mission of sounding the King of Italy as to his readiness to cooperate against his country's traditional enemy, he wrote on the same day: " Austria's surrender is not yet impossible. We cannot yet bind ourselves to provoke a rupture and to bring about war. Our reflections on the subject, however, will be greatly influenced by the answer to the question, What shall we be able to expect from Italy if it comes to war?"

"A very simple sentence says everything," writes Sybel, referring to this episode: "the more reserved Italy was, the more would Prussia be disposed to conclude an indifferent agreement with Austria; the readier and more decided Italy showed herself, the firmer and more warlike would be Prussia's attitude towards Austria." It was the old device of setting one State against another. How Bismarck made use of Italy will be seen by the sequel.

In the meantime, Count Blome's compromise was still open. In the definitive form in which it was reduced to a draft agreement, and after revision by Bismarck was placed before the King of Prussia, it stipulated that the rights secured to the two Powers by the Treaty of Vienna should be exercised in respect of Holstein by Austria and in respect of Schleswig by Prussia, but Prussia, in addition, having borne the heavier burden of the war, was also to be entitled to build and work the Kiel Canal, and to have two military routes and two telegraph lines through Holstein, while both duchies were to join the Customs Union. Kiel was to be a federal naval port and Rendsburg a federal fortress, but both were to be under Prussian command. Finally, Austria was to sell her rights in Lauenburg to Prussia for two and a half million Danish thalers, and to undertake not to cede Holstein to a third person until he had pledged himself to comply with the foregoing conditions. To all these stipulations Austria agreed, and they were formally embodied in the convention of Gastein, which was completed on August 14th, and ratified by the two Sovereigns at Salzburg six days later. The convention was to take effect on September 15th, when all Austrian troops were to be withdrawn into Holstein and all Prussian troops (with the exception of those stationed at Kiel and Rendsburg) into Schleswig. It was an essential part of the agreement that, while still retaining a sort of co-proprietorship of the

two duchies, the two Powers were to divide their government, Schleswig being occupied and administered by Prussia and Holstein by Austria.

It was after the conclusion of the convention of Gastein that Herr von Bismarck was raised to the rank of Count.

THE EXTRUSION OF AUSTRIA, 1865-1866

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IN THE LIVES OF nations, as of individuals, there are climacterical periods, times of crisis, of fateful endings and new beginnings. For Germany such periods were marked by the year 843, when by the Treaty of Verdun the Carlovingian empire was divided into three parts; the year 1250, when with the death of Frederick II the glory of the Hohenstaufens entered eclipse; and the year 1648, when the Peace of Westphalia asserted the independence of the territorial Sovereigns, and so prepared the way for the ultimate paralysis of the imperial power. The year 1866, in which Austria and Prussia fought out the struggle for supremacy which had long been inevitable, similarly marked a turning-point in German history.

The arrangement confirmed by the convention of Gastein was an unnatural and impracticable one; all it did was to enable the contracting Powers to defer for a short time the disagreeable duty of looking facts clearly in the face. Ostensibly intended to repair a broken friendship, it did no more than, in Bismarck's words, "plaster over the cracks." As so often happens in international disputes submitted to the arbitrament of force, the political problem created by the war of 1864 proved more difficult than the military problem had been. It soon became evident that the convention pleased no one. The duchies themselves were incensed at an arrangement which repeated in another form the very offence for committing which Denmark had paid so severe a penalty. The Holstein Estates at once appealed to the Federal Diet for help, but inasmuch as the Powers in possession had made peace, there was no longer hope of relief in that quarter.

In Germany the convention made the States unfriendly to Prussia still more hostile. The idea of destroying the ancient independence and union of the duchies, and of bartering their populations like chattels, aroused deep indignation, and a national congress of protest was at once convened at Frankfort, still, as ever, the chosen home of lost causes and impossible loyalties. This irate body went so far as to declare it to be a public duty to refuse to pay taxes to any Government which was identified with the Austro-Prussian policy of violence. The Cabinet of Berlin addressed to the Senate of the Free City a stern demand that it should suppress such incitements to disorder, and a milder expostulation was also sent from Vienna. With a courage more honourable than discreet, the Senate promptly refused to take orders from either quarter, an assertion of independence for which the

burgesses paid dearly at a later date. The Governments and peoples of the secondary States were particularly angry with Austria. From Prussia they expected nothing better, but Austria they had trusted, and now they felt that their confidence had been betrayed.

If feeling was strong in Germany, it was hardly less strong abroad. In a circular despatch (September 14th) issued to the British diplomatic representatives abroad Lord Russell declared: "Violence and conquest are the bases upon which alone the partitioning Powers found their agreement. Her Majesty's Government deeply lament the disregard thus shown to the principles of public right and the legitimate claims of a people to be heard as to the disposal of their own destiny." It was a virtuous and proper sentiment, honestly entertained, but, like much earlier moralizing in the same quarter, it did not cost much. The British nation divided its indignation between Bismarck, who had duped Europe, and its own Government, which had left Denmark in the lurch.

No one was more indignant, or indignant with greater cause, at the course which events had taken than the Queen, now that her generous defence of Prussia, which had been intended to safeguard the independence of the duchies, proved simply to have played into Bismarck's hands and helped to further his schemes of aggrandizement. She, however, had already passed judgment upon that statesman when it became clear, a year before, that the duchies were to be betrayed. "It is quite right," she said in a message to her Foreign Secretary (August 25, 1864), "that . . . Prussia should at least be made aware of what she (the Queen) and her Government, and every honest man in Europe, must think of the gross and unblushing violation of every assurance and pledge that she has given which Prussia has been guilty of."

Equally or more bitter was public opinion in France. Paris was aflame at the violence offered to the sacred cause of nationality, which had been the foremost object of French foreign policy under Louis Napoleon. On August 29th, Drouyn de Lhuys, the Foreign Minister, issued a warmly-worded circular to the French embassies condemning the convention as a triumph of force over right and an outrage upon the public conscience of Europe. Although Napoleon, in conversation with the Prussian envoy, condemned this document and professed to disown responsibility for its authorship and publication,

it nevertheless faithfully expressed his mind. Bismarck received the affront quietly; for the present he had no intention of quarrelling with the Emperor.

Nor was the convention commended by the spirit in which Prussia at once began the administration of Schleswig. The Government appointed as governor General von Manteuffel, a capable soldier, who understood military discipline but not human nature. Not only did he, in the exercise of an indisputable right, clear out every trace of the Augustenburg agitation in the duchy, superseding all officials, high and low, who were suspected of heresy, and requiring the entire bureaucracy to take the oath of fidelity to the Prussian King, but his treatment of the population in general was austere and unconciliatory. "Let the people first learn obedience," said the new Governor, "and then they will soon learn to love us" – words of fatal import for the later treatment of the Danes of the duchy. The ways of this old martinet were even too harsh for the Government at home, and soon mild expostulations had to be sent from Berlin. Manteuffel also did great mischief by prematurely blurting out with soldierly bluntness his Government's intention to annex the duchy, and declaring that "every seven feet of Schleswig land which the Danes wanted back would first have to be covered by his body" – a brave resolution which, after Duppel and Alsen, there was little probability of his ever putting to the test. Very different was the treatment of the Holsteiners by Austria, whose Governor, Field-Marshal von Gablenz, promised in an early proclamation to respect their institutions, and in all his utterances and dealings avoided the spirit of ascendancy and conquest. The rival "sort of Government" at Kiel had degenerated into a mere centre of agitation for the Duke of Augustenburg, and this agitation Gablenz, acting on instructions, made no attempt to discourage. For a time, indeed, the hopes of the pretender revived. Soon it became plain that the Gastein convention was merely intended to serve for Prussia as a starting-point for new negotiations for the settlement of the dispute. Hitherto the withdrawal of the allies from the duchies and the setting up of a new Sovereign had been, or had appeared to be, at least a possible solution, even from Prussia's standpoint. The negotiations on those lines were now a closed chapter. Bismarck had not acquired a half-interest in the duchies for the mere pleasure of entering into partnership with Austria, still less for the

sake of admitting a third person into the firm; such was not his idea of putting Prussia's money to usury. He intended that Prussia should remain in Schleswig; the only uncertain question was how long Austria should be allowed to remain in Holstein. In pursuing his plans, however, he was still beset by hostility everywhere.

The convention had not been signed many months before the quarrel broke out anew in diplomatic discussions, marked on Prussia's side by great vigour and ingenuity, on Austria's by less skill but equal persistence. Now and then it almost seemed that the disputants were about to come to terms, but momentary approaches were invariably succeeded by fresh disagreements; always for one side or the other some condition was unacceptable or some concession inadequate. As time passed and the breach widened, Austria saw with growing clearness that Bismarck's real aim was annexation outright *à tout prix*, and annexation not of one of the duchies only but, sooner or later, of both.

In the meantime Bismarck was quietly preparing for the eventuality of war. His first concern was to know whether Prussia would be able to count on Napoleon's neutrality. The reports from Goltz had of late been encouraging, but upon so critical an issue he was not satisfied with the assurances of another. He proposed, therefore, that he should visit Biarritz, where the Emperor was expected in October. The King, still smarting under the August circular, was at first opposed to the meeting as suggesting a cordiality which he did not feel, but in the end he allowed his Minister to go on condition that he talked little and made no promises. First calling at Paris, where he had satisfactory conversations with Rouher, the head of the Government, and Drouyn de Lhuys, Bismarck was in Biarritz at the beginning of October and remained there till the end of the month. Frequent conversations with the Emperor convinced him that he was well disposed to Prussia, and might be counted on with certainty to observe towards her a benevolent neutrality in the event of a war with Austria. Napoleon put forward territorial claims in return, but Bismarck succeeded in satisfying him without giving any definite pledge of assent.

The interview also determined at least one phase of the succession dispute. The Prince of Augustenburg told Prince Hohenlohe later that from it dated Bismarck's refusal to favour his claims further in any

way. Previously he had appeared to be in entire agreement with him: "after his return he tried every possible subterfuge and evasion. . . . He (the Prince) was ready to make every possible concession, but Bismarck wanted annexation."

On November 5th the question again came before the Federal Diet in the form of a renewed proposal by Bavaria, Saxony, and Hesse-Darmstadt, that the allies should be requested to convene as soon as possible a representative assembly of Holstein, which should co-operate in the settlement of the question of succession, and to use their influence to bring about the admission of Schleswig to the Federation. After Austria and Prussia had succeeded in delaying decision upon this proposal, they secured its reference to a committee (November 18th).

All the time the Augustenburg agitation in Holstein continued with unabated vigour. Demonstrations were held in many parts of the duchy; deputations were received by the Prince, who in reply made stimulating speeches which, while not welcome to Austria, were as wormwood and gall to Prussia. Against these proceedings Bismarck protested to Vienna in letters which recalled the fact that although the Gastein convention had assigned to each State a special sphere of influence, their joint sovereignty remained unaffected, so that both were equally interested in everything that happened in either of the duchies. Austria declined to take action against the Prince or his friends, not recognizing the need for interference so long as their agitation did not transgress constitutional forms. In November she also rejected another proposal that she should cede to Prussia her interest in Holstein, as she had ceded that in Lauenburg, for a money payment.

So it continued to the end of 1865, at which time no progress had been made towards an understanding; rather, every indication pointed to growing estrangement and ultimate rupture. The new year brought fresh causes of alarm: there were more Augustenburg demonstrations, leading to renewed protests to Vienna, as futile as before. By way of compensation, however, the Schleswig-Holstein nobility on January 23rd addressed to Bismarck a petition urging the annexation of the two duchies to Prussia.

Three days later the Minister addressed to the Austrian Government a strong remonstrance, complaining of the open encouragement given in Holstein to revolutionary agitation

objectionable to Prussia and dangerous to the monarchical principle, and asking for a plain answer, yea or nay, to the question whether Austria was willing to suppress them, so making a definite choice between the Prince of Augustenburg and Prussia. “A negative or evasive reply to our request,” the letter continued, “would convince us that the Imperial Government does not desire permanently to go hand in hand with us, but that the tendencies hostile to Prussia – a traditional antagonism which we believed had been overcome – are stronger than the sentiment of cohesion and of common interest.” He added that failing a satisfactory reply, followed by appropriate action, Prussia would reserve full freedom to adapt her policy to her own interests.

On February 7th Mensdorff returned the nonchalant challenge that what Austria did or allowed to be done in Holstein was a matter only for herself and her Governor, and that she conceded Prussia’s right to exercise the same liberty in Schleswig. He added that far from pursuing a policy hostile to Prussia or Germany, Austria had gravely prejudiced her position with her old friends, the secondary States, owing to her fidelity to the Prussian alliance. Bismarck’s reply to this challenge was the verbal intimation to Karolyi that Prussia’s relations with Austria no longer partook of the late intimate character, but were those which existed before the outbreak of the Danish war – neither better nor worse than her relations with any other State.

That was all he could say as a diplomat, but his true opinion of the situation was very different. Convinced that it was hopeless either to lead or drive Austria, conscious that he had gone too far to be able to draw back, and recognizing clearly that he had brought Prussia face to face with the alternatives of another *Olmütz* or war, Bismarck now determined that his future action should so be directed as to favour war, and if need be provoke it. The French ambassador in Berlin at that time, Count Benedetti, records how early in 1866 a diplomat told Bismarck: “Austria does not want war, and will be careful not to give you a pretext for it.” To this the Minister is said to have replied: “I have a whole bagful of pretexts and even of plausible reasons. When the time comes war will break out without surprising any one.” Reporting to his Government a conversation with him on the subject on February 11th, Benedetti attributes to Bismarck the words, “We shall go quickly, and perhaps we shall go far.”

A fateful Council of Ministers was held in Berlin on February 28th. The King presided, and with him were, besides the Ministers, the Crown Prince, Count von der Goltz, the Prussian ambassador to France, and three generals. The King had now been persuaded, and in opening the proceedings he declared that the nation wished for the annexation of the duchies, so that withdrawal would now be a sign of weakness. “We do not want war,” he said, “but we must go forward on our way without shrinking from it.” Bismarck spoke openly, and even vehemently, for war: it was sure to come one day, he said, and it would be more advantageous for Prussia that it should be now rather than later. With the single exception of Bodelschwingh, all the other Ministers reiterated or endorsed his words, and the generals added their yea and amen; while Goltz gave the assurance that Napoleon’s neutrality might be counted on. Now, as before, it was the Crown Prince who championed the unpopular side. Almost alone amongst the King’s intimate associates and advisers he had throughout the controversies and frictions of the preceding two years retained a proper sense of the gravity of an armed conflict between the two peoples, and had reprobated it as fratricide and a crime against German nationality. Once more this courageous counsellor, the youngest and wisest of them all, raised his voice in earnest protest. It was in vain. Having won over the King, Bismarck knew that no one else mattered. The decision was therefore for war. It was understood that there was not to be a formal declaration of hostilities at once, but war was to be the end towards which future action should tend. The King closed the Council with the assurance that for Prussia the war would be a just war, since he had “asked God to show him the right way.”

War having now been deliberately decided on, Bismarck was determined that it should not merely settle the dispute over the duchies, but should leave no outstanding question between Prussia and Austria undecided, so that at the end each should begin with a clean slate. For him the Schleswig-Holstein question was only one phase of the German question; more truly, it was the German question in miniature, and in the smaller as in the larger problem the essential issue was the same – the impossibility of a system of dualism, when of the rival Powers one merely claimed superiority while the other possessed it. For him the principal object of the war was to be the

scission of the union which perpetuated this unnatural relationship and the ejection of Austria from a political fellowship in which she had no longer a rightful place.

In a grave despatch to the envoys to foreign Powers he referred pointedly to the necessity for facing the question of federal reform, laying stress upon the inadequacy of the existing military system, and urging that Prussia's interests were in a special manner identical with those of Germany, since the safety of the one was absolutely dependent upon the safety of the other.

From the beginning of March both of the Powers were making preparations for the apparently inevitable encounter – Austria even more openly than her rival, though not with equal seriousness. For while Mensdorff was just as opposed to war as ever, and may have regarded it as still avoidable, the pressure of the military party was becoming too strong for him. Few people doubted in Vienna at that time that Prussia was laying a trap into which she herself would fall.

Simultaneously with military preparations, Bismarck was also making political preparations – alliances where they were expedient and friendly agreements where they were not – and here Austria showed a singular lack of foresight.

Russia had already assured Prussia of an attitude of benevolent neutrality in consideration of friendly influence in Oriental questions at a later date. An understanding had been reached with France at Biarritz, but now it was necessary to make some more explicit statement on the compensation question. As soon as he returned to Paris from the War Council, Count Goltz waited upon the Emperor in order to make sure once more of his neutrality and good-will. He told him frankly (March 5th) that the Schleswig-Holstein question had now been merged in the question of German unity, and that it was Prussia's aim, after having beaten Austria and acquired the duchies, to create a confederation of the North German States under her own leadership, with a constitution based on that proposed in 1849 for all Germany. What was Napoleon's attitude in this matter? Napoleon agreed to this large programme, but asked for compensations in case Prussia should add other territories than the duchies. Goltz favoured the idea, and several possible acquisitions were discussed – French Switzerland, South Belgium, Luxemburg, and portions of the Rhenish territories of Prussia and Bavaria. The conversation ended without definite

proposals on either side, but Napoleon had received such encouragement that he was satisfied, and closed the interview with the assurance that "it would not be difficult to agree at the right time."

In reporting the incident to his Government, Goltz wrote: "I regard it as a gain that by postponing negotiations the Emperor has spared us the necessity of offending him by refusing his wishes." It is true that Goltz had not assented, but he had not dissented; he had even left upon Napoleon's mind the very definite impression that Prussia would be willing to cede to him German territory as the price of his neutrality. When, a little later, Napoleon returned to the question and asked outright for territory on the left bank of the Rhine, Bismarck instructed Goltz that, although the demand was one impossible to fulfil, "in view of the congress (then proposed by Napoleon), it is not advisable to refuse to negotiate upon it," while in June he told Benedetti in Berlin that the King was of opinion that if France had to have compensation it should be in the form of French-speaking districts, and "perhaps he might be able to persuade him to agree to the cession of Trèves, to which Napoleon might add Luxemburg." Once more nothing more definite was decided, as was Bismarck's intention. Nevertheless, Napoleon appears to have been satisfied with the assurances given to him; and it is probable that their very vagueness, far from detracting from their value, convinced him the more of Bismarck's good faith.

Having made reasonably sure of France, Bismarck next approached Italy. Here something more than a good understanding was desirable, and he was anxious for a military alliance. If Italy could be induced to fight on Prussia's side, two objects would be achieved – on the one hand, the French *entente* would be strengthened, and on the other hand, Austria would be compelled to divide her forces. It had not been without a deliberate purpose on Bismarck's part that a high Prussian order had been conferred upon Victor Emmanuel at the beginning of the year.

It was the folly as well as the misfortune of Austrian diplomacy at this time that it took far too lightly a situation which was pregnant with possibilities of disaster. Mensdorff had taken office as Foreign Secretary with the honest desire to accommodate and conciliate Prussia on the federal question, if that were possible. His efforts,

however, failed to count on the support of an undivided Cabinet, for while Esterhazy was with him in the desire to find a basis of compromise and avoid a rupture at all costs, the section represented by the Minister- President, Belcredi, and Biegeleben believed that the only policy worthy of the Hofburg was one of arrogant defiance. If in the Schleswig-Holstein dispute Mensdorff was handicapped by the same division of counsels, it is also clear that he failed to recognize either the gravity of the issues at stake or the fatalism which seemed to be dogging his steps. As late as March, 1866, he wrote to Duke Ernest of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha with a light-heartedness which in the circumstances of the moment seemed to border on levity: “I have not invented the stupid Schleswig-Holstein question, and must unluckily swallow down the sins of past years. Whether or not we shall escape from this most tedious of all tedious affairs without a collision I cannot as yet say.” When these words were written Bismarck had prepared Louis Napoleon for the collision as inevitable, and had made sure of his neutrality, and the negotiations with Victor Emmanuel had been opened.

It was solely due to Austria’s short-sightedness that these negotiations succeeded or were even possible. “Austria arrives always too late,” said Prince Napoleon, referring to this incident. Austrian procrastination, in fact, was throughout the great tragedy of the war of 1866. It might have been possible for the Emperor to have made sure of Italy’s neutrality before Bismarck set his wits to work, had he only shown moderate foresight. In the previous autumn Victor Emmanuel, through his Prime Minister, La Marmora, had already attempted to come to an arrangement with him on the basis of the cession of Venetia in return for a payment of a thousand million lire; that done, he was prepared to conclude a commercial treaty with Austria and in certain eventualities even to assist her in war. The offer was rejected with that psychical blindness which has so often characterized Austrian statecraft in times of national crisis. Then Bismarck came upon the scene, and proposed a treaty of alliance under which Italy should help Prussia, and in the event of the war being successful receive Venetia as a reward. “Instead of buying Venetia with money which would enable Austria to reconquer both that province and Lombardy,” he said, “it would be safer to invest the money in a war as Prussia’s ally,” 1775. Feb. and the argument at

once went home.

Various forms of treaty were proposed and discussed – a defensive and offensive treaty of indefinite duration, a treaty to come into force only on the declaration of war, and a treaty for a limited term. Victor Emmanuel chose the last, and on April 8th a treaty of alliance, to last three months, was concluded on his behalf by General Govone in Berlin. By it Italy undertook to declare war upon Austria directly Prussia took the initiative, and neither side was to conclude peace or an armistice without the other's consent until Italy had secured Venetia and Prussia territory in Austria with an equivalent population. It was thus left to Prussia to decide when war should begin and, in effect, when it should end. If within three months war had not broken out, Italy was to regain full freedom of action. The treaty was perhaps as notable for its omissions as for what it contained: seeing that if Italy were attacked by Austria, Prussia was to be under no obligation to help her by action either on Italian territory or in Germany. While thus imposing upon Italy duties, it conferred upon her no rights.

In this document war was justified on the high ground of federal reform. The second article set forth that Prussia was to call in the aid of her ally "if the negotiations which his Majesty the King of Prussia has opened with the other German Governments, with a view to a reform of the federal constitution, conformable to the needs of the German nation, should fail, and his Majesty in consequence had to resort to arms, in order to give effect to his proposals." In his attempts to win over the larger German States Bismarck was less successful. He tried to detach Bavaria from Austria by the offer of a reform of the Federation which would have given her the leadership and military command of the Southern States. Bavaria, however, had no great fault to find with the Bund as it was. It was for most of the States a comfortable arrangement under which they enjoyed equal rank, and were subject to little interference, while the presence of two powerful rivals in the union, so far from being objectionable, had the great advantage that it gave to the rest a feeling of security which they might not otherwise have enjoyed. The attitude of Bavaria was shared by the other secondary States. Throughout Germany Bismarck's action on the Schleswig-Holstein question had, in fact, created against Prussia a deep feeling of distrust and resentment. The minor States in particular feared to be Prussianized themselves, and with the fate of

the duchies and the evidence of Bismarck's high-handed ways at home before their eyes, they were disposed to prefer the Bund with its freedom to a reorganized Germany under such a hard taskmaster. Even in Prussia public opinion was as yet far from endorsing the policy which was leading straight to war. "For the last month," wrote Field-Marshal von Blumenthal in his Diary on May 4th, "everybody has been crying out against Count Bismarck, saying that he is arrogant and wants war at any price." There were responsible newspapers, never open to the accusation of demagogic leanings, like the *Cologne Gazette*, which did not hesitate to say that Austria was in the right and Prussia in the wrong. Almost generally at that time Prussia was regarded as a wilful disturber of the peace and a nuisance to her neighbours and federal allies.

Meanwhile, in the duchies Bismarck resorted to measures of open provocation, devised for no other object than to make co-operation impossible for Austria, and to cast upon her affronts that might tempt her into acts of retaliation. On March 11th he caused an ordinance to be issued forbidding, on pain of imprisonment with hard labour, any attempt forcibly to set up in either duchy an authority opposed to the rights of the condominate Sovereigns. The threat, which was aimed at the Augustenburg advocates, and was obviously intended to humiliate Austria in their eyes, caused Mensdorff to invite the Prussian Government five days later to state plainly whether it sought to destroy the Gastein convention and the Germanic Federation together.

Bismarck's treatment of the challenge was characteristic of the man. While telling the Austrian ambassador that his answer to Mensdorff's question was a categorical "No," he added immediately: "If my intentions were different, do you really think I should have answered otherwise?"

Both sides were now actively mobilizing, and the secondary States were likewise preparing to take sides. Vienna was feverish and defiant, eager that the Prussian upstart should at last be humbled and taught a lesson, though far more convinced of the desirability of this correction than troubled about the possibility of administering it. Nevertheless, in the middle of April Mensdorff proposed a reciprocal cessation of warlike measures, and, still working for peace more than for war, the King of Prussia met these overtures in a conciliatory spirit, to the great disappointment of his Minister, who saw his plans

threatened. At the last moment, however, the demobilization proposals broke down, since Austria was unable to expose herself in the South, where Italy was busily preparing for an attack. All this time Bismarck and Moltke were working closely together in the interest of a speedy appeal to arms. In a report of April 14th to the King, who was anxious as to the attitude of the secondary States, Moltke took a sanguine view of Prussia's chances, and ended with the words, "Only when we have once mobilized we must not fear the reproach of aggression. All delay decidedly worsens our position." A week later (April 22nd) Bismarck warned the King of the risk which would be incurred if peace were now "patched up and Austria allowed to choose a time for war less favourable to Prussia."

Already he had prepared the federal Sovereigns and Governments for a decisive turn of events when (April 9th) he placed before the Diet, through the Prussian delegate, Herr von Savigny, a proposal of federal reform on democratic lines, which had fallen like a bombshell upon the assembly.

Before the month closed Mensdorff made a last attempt to win Prussia over to a compromise. In a statesmanlike despatch to Karolyi (April 26th), free from the warmth which on both sides had crept into recent discussions, he renewed the old offer of special concessions in the duchies, and invited Prussia, subject to these, to accept as ruler such a claimant as the Federal Diet might judge to have the strongest right to the succession in Holstein. He intimated that if Prussia rejected this proposal Austria would refer the entire question to the Diet and the Holstein Estates. Bismarck's reply was a refusal and a denial of the right of the Diet to any voice in the matter.

From the beginning of May not only Austria and Prussia but all Germany was arming with vigour and haste. The Ministers of Bavaria, Würtemberg, Baden, Saxony, Darmstadt, Nassau, and several of the Thuringian States had of late been in frequent conference, and their discussions were carried on in a spirit more than ever hostile to the northern kingdom. There was no doubt as to which side the secondary States would take. To allow Austria to be beaten, or even weakened, would in their opinion give to Prussia a prestige which would make her unbearable as a neighbour and undesirable as an ally. The Würtemberg *State Gazette* expressed the general feeling when it declared on May 9th that "a direct or indirect domination of Prussia

would be a far worse national calamity than conquest by France." So all the South German States felt and believed. Even in Prussia earnest voices of warning were raised by men of weight who believed that their country was in the wrong. In a letter written in tears, Bismarck's colleague in the Ministry, Bodelschwingh, begged him to keep the peace. "I entreat and implore you most earnestly," he wrote, "impute to Austria, with her equal rights in Schleswig-Holstein, only what is fair and not offensive to her honour; endeavour to secure us an honourable peace; and then solve the German question in such a manner that both Prussia and Austria will gain internal strength." To Roon, the Minister of War, his friend Ludwig von Gerlach appealed with equal urgency, begging him "by all that to you and me is holy" to do his utmost to prevent war, and so "keep unstained the conscience of the aged King and the nation."

Bodelschwingh seemed fated to be Bismarck's opponent on critical issues. He had resisted him in 1864 over the question of Austria's relation to the Customs Union. He had earned a black mark when at the Council of Ministers in February he opposed the idea of war, supporting his attitude by making difficulties when votes for military preparations were demanded. At another Council on May 14th he repeated that offence, and thereby sealed his doom. The King was in favour of forgetting the incident, and so wrote to his Minister-President, and when Bodelschwingh offered to tender his resignation chivalrously asked him to remain in office. That was not Bismarck's way. Before the end of the month he reported to his master that " Herr von Bodelschwingh, on the plea of nervous strain, has repeatedly asked to be allowed to resign, and I believe that it would be neither possible nor advantageous to move him to remain." The resignation took effect at once, and Herr von der Heydt took the vacant portfolio.

Saxony was the first of the secondary States to prepare for war. There the traditional antagonism against Prussia was revived; the Saxons had never forgiven the laceration of their kingdom in 1815, when Frederick William III had carved for himself a new province out of one of its most fertile regions, and the old rankling hatred burst forth with fresh vigour. Now there seemed a chance of regaining the lost territory with interest. Hanover, spurred by a similar hope of aggrandizement, was hardly less eager for the fray; its share of the spoil was to be in the direction of Holstein and Westphalia. Bavaria

and Würtemberg, too, had expectations – the one was to have part of the Rhineland, and the other the little State of Hohenzollern. Finally, Austria counted on Silesia. Almost it might seem that Prussia had been dismembered in advance. Austria and her allies never doubted for a moment that they would prove too strong for Prussia. They had nominally a large numerical superiority in men, and had they been willing to act together from the first, instead of dividing their forces, the result might have justified their confidence.

The Prussian nation, or even any large section of it, cannot be said to have wanted war, and the army itself had no strong desire for it; by both, indeed, France was regarded as the natural enemy of Germany, and in any case an enemy more dangerous than Austria. The politicians and intellectuals were conscious that Austria had far too long played a domineering part and that the threatened struggle was with the one great obstacle to national unity, but this feeling did not extend to the masses of the people. Least of all was this the case in the Roman Catholic districts. In the Rhineland and Silesia there were priests, and even prelates, who openly condemned the imminent conflict, and on May 28th the Archbishop of Cologne (Melchers) warned the King of the risks he was running and of the stubborn unwillingness of the reservists to join the colours.

In particular the democratic parties were still far too embittered against the Government, because of its unconstitutional treatment of the Diet, to be enthusiastic over any enterprise proposed by Bismarck. Already, in time of peace, he had shown his contempt for parliamentary institutions; if that could be done in the green tree, what would be done in the dry? From the standpoint of popular rights the prospect of military success was almost more alarming than that of failure, for success would inevitably confirm the Government in its attitude and probably doom the Diet to an indefinite future of impotence. Patriotism and political principle were thus in conflict. The choice which had to be made was a hard one, and the Liberals are not to be blamed if they chose the way that exposed them at a later date to much misrepresentation and undeserved obliquy.

The majority in the Lower House did its best to discourage the idea of armed action, and emphasized its conviction by once more refusing supplies. Therein it was at once supported by a large body of public opinion. Peace demonstrations were held in many parts of the

country and petitions were freely addressed to the King by municipal and other representative bodies begging him not to unsheathe the sword. When the Diet refused to vote money for the war, the Government issued Treasury bills to the amount necessary. It was about this time (May 7th) that Bismarck received his first baptism of fire in the form of a bullet aimed at him in Berlin by a crazy fellow named Cohen or Blind; he was injured, but not seriously.

At the beginning of May, while there yet seemed a faint chance of staving off hostilities, Louis Napoleon had again proposed his favourite specific of a congress of the Powers. It was his idea, however, that the congress should discuss other questions besides the Schleswig-Holstein dispute – for ex ample, the question of Italy, the future organization of Germany, and perhaps incidentally the rectification of the French frontiers as determined fifty years before. In a speech made at Auxerre (May 6th), following a vehement attack upon Prussia in the *Corps Législatif* by M. Thiers Napoleon said frankly that he "detested those treaties of 1815, which it is sought today to make the sole basis of our foreign policy." The congress was, in fact, to take a general survey of European politics, and to some extent recast the map of the Continent. Great Britain and Russia were favourable to the proposal, Lord Clarendon holding that if the Germanic Federation was going to be dissolved the Powers which had helped to create it ought not to be kept in darkness regarding the arrangements intended to replace it. Of the two disputants, Prussia gave a conditional acceptance to the invitation sent by France, England, and Russia at the end of May, while Austria imposed the stipulation that no proposal which would have the effect of giving an increase of territory to any of the participating Powers – the probable demand for the cession of Venetia to Italy, even more than the question of the Elbe duchies, was in the mind of Count Mensdorff – should be discussed. This condition was regarded as tantamount to a refusal, and the idea of a congress was abandoned.

"There are moments in history which never return," said Bismarck on one occasion. Such was the moment in which it was open to Austria to submit her cause to the adjudication of the Powers in 1866. Regarded in the light of later events, her refusal was undoubtedly a mistake, for it deprived her of the opportunity of setting herself right with Europe and of compelling Prussia to bare her motives to the full

light of day. Even granting that Austria might have been pressed to cede Venetia, it was a renunciation for which, as events were soon to show, she was in effect already prepared, while, on the other hand, it is at least probable that the settlement of the Schleswig-Holstein question might not have left her empty-handed. Nevertheless, Bismarck's pretence that Austria's action in refusing the congress brought on the war was absurd; all that could be fairly maintained was that it made war from Prussia's standpoint less inexcusable. For if Austria had been bent on fighting at all hazards, it could only have been to her interest to have gained the respite which a congress would have offered her, with a view to using this for completing her military preparations, a paramount consideration in view of their backwardness.

While the congress proposal was still under discussion an attempt was made on new lines to bridge the widening gulf between the rival Powers. It originated with Baron Anton von Gablenz, brother of the Austrian General, who had for a long time lived in Prussia. His idea of federal reform was that Germany should be divided into northern and southern spheres of influence, under the military leadership of Prussia and Austria respectively, the other States being won for the arrangement by the promise of a central parliament, but to be compelled to assent, if needful, on pain of military occupation. The duchies were to become an independent State, under a Hohenzollern Prince, subject to the sale of Kiel harbour to Prussia and the repayment by the duchies to Austria of part of her costs in the recent war. The scheme was first submitted to Mensdorff, who was so pleased with it, or at least with the prospect of a pacific settlement which it seemed to offer, that he authorized Gablenz to sound Bismarck, who likewise was favourably impressed. The ensuing negotiations for a time seemed to run smoothly. It was to be part of the agreement that the proposed federal unions of the North and South should enter into an alliance, and that all Germany should guarantee the integrity of Austria's Italian dominion. Any difficulty which might arise with Bavaria was to be adjusted by the concession to her of a special position in the Southern federation.

It is nevertheless difficult to believe that in lending to this scheme an apparently indulgent ear Bismarck had any other idea in mind than the hope of dulling Austria's apprehensions and gaining time for more

complete preparations for war. While the scheme was still under consideration, Duke Ernest of Coburg visited the King in Berlin (May 24th), and he relates that he found him, to his surprise, "by no means disposed to doubt that peace would be maintained." Conversing with Bismarck on the following day, however, he was assured that war must be definitely expected.

On the other hand, the King of Prussia clearly approached the compromise in good faith, and was possibly prepared to accept it as the basis of a friendly settlement. Not so the Emperor, who declined to entertain the proposals on the ground that they came too late, though he may also have doubted the genuineness of this sudden change of front by a Minister who had hitherto shown so little disposition to be accommodating.

On the same day that Austria rejected the suggestion of a congress she transferred to the Federal Diet the question of the duchies as one which should no longer be left to the futile wrangling of the two German Great Powers, and instructed the Governor of Holstein to convene the assembly of Estates for the purpose of obtaining an expression of their views as to the future. The breach was now complete, for inasmuch as Austria had the secondary States on her side, the Diet was sure to decide in her favour.

Now had come the time for Bismarck to make his boldest cast of the dice. It was the proposal of a national parliament to be elected upon a democratic franchise. For it was a gamble pure and simple – a gamble for popularity, a speculation in a nation's political aspirations, aspirations which he had never shared in the past and did not share now. "Looking to the necessity," he wrote later, "in a fight against an overwhelming foreign Power, of being able in extreme need to use even revolutionary means, I had had no hesitation whatever in throwing into the frying-pan by means of the circular despatch of June 10, 1866, the most powerful ingredient known at the time to liberty-mongers, namely universal suffrage, so as to frighten off foreign monarchies from trying to put a finger into our national omelette."

Bismarck had foreshadowed this move so long ago as January 18th in a letter to Count Usedom. "The German question rests for the time," he then wrote. "Should there be a further development in Austria's relationship to the secondary States in a spirit aggressive to Prussia, events might easily take a turn which would involve the existence of

the Bund. In that case it is not improbable that Prussia might take a resolute initiative on the German question." Already (April 9th), as has been stated, the Prussian envoy to the Diet had thrown out vague suggestions of federal reform, and had by resolution invited the Governments to confer upon the necessary arrangements. The Diet had not appeared to take the matter seriously, and it was certainly in no mind to accept Prussia's leadership in a departure so unexpected. It had, in fact, referred the Prussian resolution to Committee with little concern one way or the other, even Austria offering no opposition. In Prussia the proposal was received by the Liberals with incredulity mixed with amusement, and a well-known humorous journal of the day wrote that if Bismarck intended to become its competitor it would at once abandon the field to him.

No constitution had been drafted at the time, and perhaps Bismarck had at the best only a shadowy idea of what he thought might successfully bait the popular fancy. Urged to give some definite indication of his intentions to the Governments, which were unwilling to pledge themselves to abstractions, he agreed with Savigny upon certain broad principles, and authorized him to communicate them to his colleagues in Frankfort. The proposal was that a parliament should be elected by manhood suffrage, on the basis of one deputy for every 100,000 of the population. The existing powers of the Diet were to be extended, yet without any sensible restriction of the independence of the States, but there was no suggestion of a federal Sovereign. This outline, as notified to the Committee of the Diet on May 11th, was thought to be so moderate that the secondary States were not prepared to vote against it, and the sitting was adjourned so that they might obtain instructions. Only the Austrian representative protested.

While Prussia was thus plying the Diet with proposals of constitutional reform, Austria persisted in her endeavours to transfer the venue of the duchy dispute itself from Berlin and Vienna to Frankfort, and in the summoning of the Holstein Estates. In an identical note to the Powers she also disclaimed any desire for territory. If Austria's proceedings in Holstein at this moment were irregular, they were not nearly so irregular as Prussia's attitude had been for two years, yet with his genius for seizing hold of the weak points of an adversary's case and turning his mistakes to advantage, Bismarck professed a virtuous indignation, and succeeded in

communicating it to the King. “The King is so constituted,” he once said, “that if one wishes to determine him to assert a right it is first necessary to convince him that it is being challenged.” This trait in his Sovereign’s essentially candid and straightforward character he was able again to use with perfect success. We find the King writing to the Archbishop of Cologne at this time with unusual asperity: “In the Diet, Austria has one-sidedly and without the prior knowledge of Prussia torn in pieces the Treaty of Gastein, and contrary to that treaty has submitted to that body the question of the duchies, which should have been settled between us. So have succeeded one after another on Austria’s part, without cessation, perfidy, lying, and breach of treaty engagements.”

In a note of June 3rd the Prussian Government protested against Austria’s action as a breach of the Gastein convention, and pointed out that its result was that both Powers reverted to their original position under the Treaty of Vienna. Coming from a Power which had already violated both agreements, either in letter or spirit, in so many ways, which had systematically usurped the rights vested in Austria and Prussia jointly, had issued penal ordinances intended to suppress throughout both duchies any opinions on the question at issue contrary to its own, had itself agreed to refer the whole question to a European Congress, and, to crown all, had cancelled its old obligations and reclaimed complete liberty of action, this protest came with a very bad grace and with little force.

In the Diet, Prussia opposed the Austrian proposal on the ground that the Bund had nothing to do with Schleswig and that as regards Holstein its competence did not extend to the question of succession. Finally, in a note to the embassies abroad, Bismarck represented Prussia as the innocent victim of designing malice. “All our information points to the determination of Austria to make war on Prussia,” he wrote. “The Austrian Government wants war at any price, partly because it counts on success, partly with a view to evade internal difficulties, and even with the avowed intention of retrieving its finance by contributions from Prussia or by an honourable bankruptcy.”

The view held in Germany generally was less flattering to Bismarck and Prussia. It was faithfully reflected in a solemn letter of warning addressed to the former on June 11th by the Bavarian

Minister-President, Baron von der Pfordten, an impressive document of State which it is impossible even now to read unmoved. Just two days before, in a letter written to Duke Ernest of Coburg, Bismarck had spoken of Pfordten as "one of the most honourable and most unprejudiced supporters of German interests," and this is what this high-minded statesman thought.

"The decision upon peace and war is imminent," wrote Pfordten. "It is my firm conviction that it rests in your hands, since it depends on the course taken by Prussia in relation to the duchies. If you want annexation at any price, war is inevitable. If Prussia decides to renounce annexation, war is impossible. If Austria began war for any other reason, she would certainly be isolated; but if war is brought about by the duchies, I for one believe that Prussia will be isolated. God is my witness that I am influenced neither by antipathy against Prussia nor sympathy with Austria. As a German I adjure you, take counsel again with your soul before the fateful word is spoken whose consequences will be incalculable."

Undeterred by Prussia's protests, Austria on June 5th invited the Holstein Estates to meet at Itzehoe six days later. Acting on instructions received from Berlin, the Prussian Governor of Schleswig, General Manteuffel, promptly served on his colleague Gablenz a notification, which had already been sent to Vienna, to the effect that inasmuch as Austria had appealed to the Diet, the Gastein convention no longer applied, and Prussia was at liberty to exercise complete cojurisdiction in both duchies. Accordingly, Manteuffel had been authorized "in all peace" to set up garrisons in Holstein the next day, as Austria was at liberty to do in Schleswig. As for the convocation of the Estates, the King of Prussia's sanction was necessary to this step, and until it had been given the summons must be cancelled. Gablenz protested against this wanton insult, and declined to revoke the summons, which was just what Manteuffel hoped would happen. The Austrian Government had instructed Gablenz, isolated as he was and beyond reach of speedy relief, not to engage the Prussians with his small force, however provoked. He accordingly evacuated Rendsburg and removed the seat of government to Altona, whereupon Manteuffel issued a proclamation (June 10th) announcing that he felt "obliged to take over the government of Holstein," and coolly declaring that the Austrian Governor was superseded. Impotent to retaliate for this

outrage, Gablenz withdrew his troops through Hanover, Hesse, and Bavaria to Bohemia, taking the Prince of Augustenburg with him, and left Prussia in possession of both duchies.

Matters reached a climax when on June 11th the Austrian plenipotentiary informed the Diet that Prussia had violently occupied Holstein in contravention of the Gastein treaty, and in consequence proposed the mobilization of the federal army (with the exception of the Prussian contingent) against the disturber of the peace. Inasmuch as the Federation was not concerned in the Treaty of Gastein, the resolution, as it stood, was out of order. Prussia protested accordingly, and promptly issued the warning that every vote for the resolution would be regarded as in effect a vote for war against her. In spite of this attempt to stifle the freedom of the Diet and to browbeat her federal allies, the division was fixed for the 14th. In the meantime Austria had broken off diplomatic relations with the Court of Berlin, and when the Diet again met a state of war already existed.

The resolution had been amended, on the proposal of Bavaria, by the omission of the reference to the Treaty of Gastein, yet, though changed in form, it was the same in substance and purpose, and Prussia offered to it a strongly worded protest. On a division being taken nine curial votes were given in favour of and six against the resolution. With Austria voted the four kingdoms of Bavaria, Saxony, Würtemberg, and Hanover, also electoral Hesse, grand-ducal Hesse-Nassau, and the sixteenth curia (comprising eight small States, including Frankfort), a total of nine votes. Six votes were recorded against the resolution – Mecklenburg, Luxemburg, Baden, and the curiœ comprising Saxe-Weimar and the Thuringian duchies (except Meiningen), Oldenburg, Anhalt, and Schwarzburg, and the Free Cities (except Frankfort). Prussia did not take part in the division. Her representative had already protested against the entire proceedings as a violation of the federal constitution, and lie now, in the name of his Government, declared the Federation dissolved, at the same time notifying Prussia's intention to restore it on a new and broader basis. The Prussian scheme of federal reform, of which the essential features were the ejection of Austria from Germany and the institution of a national legislature, popularly elected, was already in the hands of the various Governments, to which it had been communicated on June 10th. To Prussia's drastic challenge the President of the Diet, Baron

Kübeck, rejoined that inasmuch as the Federation, by its constitution, was a permanent and indissoluble union of the German States, Prussia could not secede at will, still less claim to dissolve it. Such a declaration, however true it might be in law, no longer carried weight in fact; for Bismarck the time had come for making good his prediction that the question of German unity would be settled not by speeches and resolutions of Diet majorities, but by force.

If anything could have persuaded the statesmen of Vienna of the danger which awaited Austria, it was the fact that though the ground was now being cleared for action, she was without allies out of Germany. The traditional foreign policy of Austria was one of alliances, and until the middle of the century that policy had stood her in good stead. Her refusal to stand by Russia in the Crimean War marked the end of the Holy Alliance, with the result that in the Italian war of 1859 she found herself without friends. Rechberg told the historian Friedjung that it had been his constant aim to find his way back to the abandoned policy of Kaunitz, Metternich, and Schwarzenberg, and to extricate Austria from the position of isolation into which she had fallen under Buol's influence. It was because the friendship of Russia was still impossible, owing to the hostility of Gortchakoff, and that of France unreliable, that he had endeavoured to work amicably with Prussia. His hopes had been disappointed, and now in the most critical moment in her history Austria found herself dependent upon the questionable support of several of the German States and the far from disinterested good-will of Louis Napoleon.

At the eleventh hour that astute diplomatist conceived the idea of negotiating a secret treaty with Austria which should at once secure compensations for France in certain eventualities and advance the cause of Italian unity another stage. The Duc de Gramont was sent to Vienna to conclude this treaty, and the details were arranged without difficulty during the four days June 9th to 12th. It provided that in the event of war between Austria and Prussia France should undertake to preserve towards Austria absolute neutrality, and to endeavour to keep Italy quiet. If the fortunes of war were favourable to her, Austria undertook not to change the status quo ante bellum in Germany except in agreement with France; if unfavourable, she was still to come to an understanding with France before assenting to any territorial changes which might disturb the European equilibrium; but

in either event Austria was to cede Venetia to France for retrocession to Italy immediately on the conclusion of peace.

Émile Ollivier is of opinion that Austria attached so much importance to this treaty that without it she would have tried to come to terms with Prussia. Yet it assured to Austria no new advantage, for Napoleon had already pledged his neutrality to Prussia, who, in virtue of the security thus offered against French attack, was able to leave her western frontiers unprotected and thus to hurl her entire army against the enemy. The only part of the treaty which, if realizable, would have been of value was Napoleon's undertaking to use influence with Italy in Austria's favour. This undertaking, however, was an empty pretence, since Italy had formed an alliance with Prussia not only with Napoleon's knowledge but with his good-will, and probably on his advice. Count Beust, who several months later became Austrian Foreign Minister, called the treaty the most incredible document which he had ever read, and indeed its humiliating terms appear to be comprehensible only on the assumption that the Austrian Government, when agreeing, to them, was in the desperate mood in which men are incapable of drawing a fair balance between gain and loss.

In the tourney of diplomacy produced by the Austro-Prussian quarrel straightforwardness was often at a discount, but for versatility the part played by Louis Napoleon carried the palm. On the strength of this treaty he issued on June 11th a pompous manifesto, in the form of a letter to his Foreign Secretary, Drouyn de Lhuys, in which he deplored the failure of his congress scheme, yet confidently asserted that the moral power of France would enable her, without drawing the sword, to safeguard the two interests vital to her – the maintenance of the European equilibrium and the protection of the work which France had achieved in Italy. He added, with sublime courage, that in preserving an attitude of vigilant neutrality France would be strong in the consciousness of her disinterestedness.

The manifesto created a bad impression in Prussia, where it was regarded as a sign that France, though keeping out of the struggle, was determined to have a hand in shaping its results. For the King and Bismarck, however, it was sufficient for the present that Napoleon could be counted on to play the part of a benevolent neutral. In setting off for the war the King, "with tears in his eyes," said to

Benedetti: “We are in the Emperor’s hands: we count on his loyalty “: and his Minister added: “Our confidence in him is so great that we are not leaving a soldier on the left bank of the Rhine.” In a proclamation to his people the King appealed to the patriotic spirit of 1813, and asked: “Who will take from us an inch of territory if we are firmly resolved to maintain the acquisitions of our fathers?” He added: “I have done everything to save Prussia the cost and the sacrifices of a war. My people know it, and God, who knows all hearts, knows it also.” For the King the claim was sincere; he, at any rate, had done what was in his power to keep the peace. The more important question was, Had Bismarck?

Conscious of the handicap with which his Government would make war abroad unless it succeeded in restoring political peace at home, Bismarck at the last moment sounded the leaders of the constitutional party in the Prussian Diet as to their willingness to come to terms. The answer was not encouraging: he was assured there could be no agreement and no supplies for the war until he sought an indemnity for the unconstitutional acts of the last four years. More money was obtained by prolonging the concessions of two railway companies, and the Diet was dissolved on May 9th, in the hope that a more tractable – Bismarck said a “more national” – Lower House would be the result. The elections did not take place, however, until July 4th, and the new Diet did not meet until the war was over. It is characteristic of Bismarck’s foresight that at this time he was already looking round in search of men able and willing to help him in the constructive work which would follow the war, and of his insight that it was not to his old party but to the Liberals that he turned. Amongst the men whom he approached was Herr von Bennigsen, the Hanoverian statesman. He even offered him the governorship of his native country as soon as Prussia should have occupied it, and was disappointed when the offer was vigorously refused.

Officially the war may be said to have begun on June 14th. Prussia made no formal declaration of hostilities against the German States opposed to her, however, for Bismarck had laid down the convenient formula that those States which were not for were against her, and he acted accordingly. Nevertheless, before resorting to extremes the Prussian Government determined to make a final attempt to divide Austria’s allies and to induce all the North German States to keep out

of the conflict. The King of Prussia had a personal interest in the attitude of Saxony, Hanover and electoral Hesse, because of kinship with their Sovereigns. Accordingly, on June 15th he invited these Sovereigns to enter into a treaty with him, binding them to reduce their armies at once to a peace footing, to observe an unarmed neutrality, and also to assent to the Prussian proposals for the reform of the federal constitution. In return Prussia was to guarantee the security and independence of their territories. All three declined his overture, whereupon Prussian troops crossed their frontiers. The defection of King John of Saxony in particular grieved him sorely, for he had for him a genuine affection. In a few days Prussia had occupied all three States, taken control of their resources, and either driven out, disarmed, or interned their troops. The invasion of Saxony was so rapid that King John withdrew at once with his army into Bohemia, there to join the Austrians. The blind King of Hanover eagerly entered the fray, but the stand made by his forces, if gallant, was short. The only pitched battle fought during the campaign on German soil was that at Langensalza between the Prussians and Hanoverians. Although in this engagement the Hanoverians repulsed the enemy, they were immediately afterwards surrounded and forced to capitulate (June 29th), with the result that the entire army was disbanded, sent home, and put on parole for the duration of the war. The power of the larger States of the North having been broken, the Prussian Government called upon the smaller States to cut themselves adrift from Austria and the Diet, and place their forces at Prussia's disposal, and most of them promptly obeyed.

All the States of the South, true to their votes in the Diet, were ranged against Prussia. Bavaria could not have entered the war except as the ally of Austria. Her leading Minister, von der Pfordten, did not altogether trust Austria, and he was almost alone amongst his countrymen in holding the conviction that she was about to enter upon a task far beyond her power, but strong traditional ties united these two neighbouring States, and the Bavarian King and Court were ardently attached to the Emperor and the policy followed by Vienna. On the other hand, the people of Bavaria in general, while they were as warmly disposed to Austria as they were antagonistic to Prussia, entered the struggle half-heartedly, not pleased that this attitude should have to take the form of armed co-operation, and wondering

whether their quixotic attachment to the cause of the Prince of Augustenburg was not proving dear at the price. As soon as the war began to go badly and the defects of the Bavarian military administration showed themselves, the complaint that the Government had not remained neutral became loud and vehement. Würtemberg and Hesse-Darmstadt responded with greater alacrity to Austria's call. The Grand Duke of Baden, on the other hand, would have joined his Prussian relative had he been able, but his people were against him, and he was compelled to swim with the stream.

In Prussia there had occurred in the meantime one of those sudden transformations of public feeling which have been repeated so often since in German history. Up to the very hour when the tocsin of war rang out the nation had been hopelessly divided on the constitutional question, insomuch that patriotism had almost become identified with hostility to the Government. Now, in the time of danger, the spirit of controversy was allayed by the magic of a powerful national appeal. It was recognized that Prussia stood before one of the great decisive events of her history, and all the protracted feud over Schleswig-Holstein, all the wearisome squabbles about succession, *condominium*, and treaty rights, all the diplomatic subtleties and duplicities of the past two years, were forgotten in face of the larger issue which now occupied the foreground. However inadequate the justification of the war, it was seen that the question which it was about to decide was not merely the fate of the duchies, but the future of Germany and her peoples. Was Old Germany, dominated by Austria, to continue, or was a place to be found in Europe henceforth for a New Germany, in which Prussia would be supreme?

Outside Prussia also there were, even among moderate people, altogether out of sympathy with Prussia's aggressive spirit and fully conscious of the enormity of a fratricidal struggle, many who regarded the war as the inevitable climax of the long-drawn-out controversy, and looked to it for the healing of the sundered German races. Still more consciously was the war regarded and welcomed in Italy as part of a historical struggle for national liberation and unity.

The harrying of the Saxon, Hanoverian, and Hessian armies was a mere incident in the war, yet it gave the cue to the more serious hostilities which followed. Austria had appealed to the Diet to exercise federal execution against Prussia, and it had agreed. It soon became

evident that she had undertaken a task far beyond her power. When the die had been cast there was much misgiving in Austrian military circles. The younger officers were eager for fight, but among the older men were many who gravely doubted whether this confidence was justified. Their apprehensions were fully realized. Too late unsuspected defects in the army and its organization came to light. The training, discipline, and moral of the men proved very unequal; there was a great lack of non-commissioned officers; and the commissariat arrangements were faulty. To magnify these disadvantages, the superior officers themselves were in general deficient in training, and in this respect altogether inferior to those of the Prussian army. Further, while the Austrian artillery was superior to that of Prussia, the Prussian infantry had again the great advantage of the new needle-gun, which had done so much destruction in the Danish war, for the Austrian military administration, ignoring the lessons of that war, had obstinately clung to an obsolete percussion gun. Finally, the force which it was found possible to put in the field fell far below the official estimates. The credulity of the Viennese upon taxis point was boundless, for they exaggerated the strength of the Austrian army just as the Parisians exaggerated that of the French army four years later. It was gravely stated that a million men would turn out under arms against barely half that number of Prussians. The contemptuous attacks of some of the Vienna journals upon the Prussian nation and its political servility had likewise a singular counterpart in the arrogant attitude of the Paris Press towards the same people on the eve of the war of 1870.

Now also Austria had to pay the penalty of her resistance to every attempt made by Prussia to win the Diet's assent to the efficient reorganization of the federal army. To a large extent this army existed only on paper. All the States were liable to supply contingents proportionate to population, but as the need for their use was rare and uncertain, most of them failed to maintain the force expected, trusting to the protection offered by the larger States, and particularly by Austria and Prussia. The result in the hour of need was disastrous. Austria should have been able to count on the help of over 200,000 South Germans and 100,000 North Germans, of whom it was hoped that a large part would be immediately available for service in Bohemia. The actual force supplied did not reach half this strength.

Bavaria's army on a war footing was supposed to be 72,000 strong, with reserves of over 100,000, for the most part of uncertain quality. She did not, in fact, furnish her prescribed contingent, for while the seventh federal army corps, for which she was responsible, should have numbered 53,400, its actual strength was only 45,000. What was lacking in numbers, however, was made up in variety; the eighth (South German) army corps numbered 35,000 instead of 47,000, but it had five commanders-in- chief, five different sets of service regulations, five kinds of signals, and guns of five different systems. The one army corps from North Germany was furnished by Saxony, Hanover, and electoral Hesse, but mainly by Saxony, whose military administration had been kept at a higher level of efficiency.

Worse still, instead of disposing their forces where they could be used to the best advantage, the various States, with true particularist jealousy, thought only of defending their own hearthstones against Prussian attack, forgetting that Prussia's success in Austria would mean their defeat in Germany. Concerned, as always, first for her own interests, Bavaria in joining Austria had taken care to stipulate that the primary object of her mobilization should be the safety of her own frontiers. She had even secured a pledge that if as a result of the struggle she lost territory she should be compensated elsewhere: the uneasy suspicion was abroad that, be the result victory or defeat, she wished to secure part of Baden. Bavaria, in fact, hoped to go to war without fighting and without taking any risks. Thus the strongest of the allied States, which should have set an example to the rest, showed the greatest inertia. When the Saxons wanted to join the Bavarians on Bavarian soil they were bidden to keep away, and when the Austrian commander-in-chief called on the Bavarian general to join forces with his own in Bohemia he met with a flat refusal. Not a Bavarian soldier left the kingdom; from first to last Bavaria gave to her ally no useful help whatever. Saxony, on the other hand, did her duty promptly and loyally.

Still more was Austria weakened owing to the necessity of giving battle simultaneously in two parts of the Empire, in the North against Prussia and in the South against Italy. A force of 74,000, forming the army of the South, was locked up in Venetia, under Archduke Albrecht: deducting this force and the still larger force needed for the garrisons and otherwise for home defence, and disregarding the allied

contingents left in Germany, and there for practical purposes isolated and impotent, the Austrian force available to attack Prussia or meet Prussian attack, as the case might be, was about a quarter of a million, to which were to be added 30,000 Saxons.

To complete the conditions of failure the preparation and execution of Austria's plan of campaign were placed in the hands of a man whose will was paralysed by distrust of himself. This was the gallant but ill-fated Field-Marshal Benedek, who was at the head of the main army of the North. Complete confidence was felt in Benedek both by the Emperor and the entire Austrian army; only he himself failed to share it. Averse to taking command, he had tried to escape the responsibility, and when he obeyed it was only from the worthy motives of duty and patriotism. He had wished to take command in Italy, where he knew his ground, and had guaranteed the Emperor success there. Had he and the Archduke changed places, the campaign might have resulted differently.

In organization, efficiency, generalship and spirit the Prussian army was all that the Austrian army was not, and its effective strength fell little if at all short of the estimate. The mobilization brought together a force of 355,000 effectives, and after all deductions for garrison and other home service, including a force sufficient to co-operate with Prussia's federal allies in coping with the hostile German States, there remained an expeditionary army of over a quarter of a million men, all highly disciplined, well armed, and well cared for. Moltke was the Prussian battle-thinker, and the three armies into which he divided his forces were commanded by Prince Frederick Charles (first army), the Crown Prince (second army), and General Herwarth von Bittenfeld (third army, or army of the Elbe).

Prussia's military system and the unconstitutional reforms of the last four years were now to be put to a critical test, for which the Danish war had been merely a preparation. Alone of the German States at the time Prussia had adopted universal service; all the secondary States had a system of conscription, with right of substitution. Austria's army was weakened by its polyethnic composition; Hungary, indeed, still disaffected because of the repeal of her constitution, kept out of the struggle, yet an army of Germans, Czechs, Poles, Croats, and Italians made a doubtful conglomeration. The Prussian army, on the other hand, was substantially

homogeneous, and it worked with the efficiency and smoothness of a skilfully devised piece of machinery. Its buoyant confidence of victory also made victory half assured.

The Bohemian campaign was in the main a succession of small encounters, fought from Austria's northern frontier onwards towards the plateau which spreads beyond the base of the Giant Mountains, culminating in a single decisive encounter. Only for a short time did the fortunes of battle oscillate, yet even so strongly favouring Prussian arms, for no serious resistance was offered to the invaders, whose three armies were able to cross the passes down to the plain and unite almost with the punctuality of a parade. Then defeat after defeat befell Austrian arms owing to want of coherent plan, wavering decisions, waste of time, during which the enemy was allowed to choose his own dispositions, and the demoralization following upon a growing recognition of marked inferiority. Benedek never attempted the offensive, but finally concentrated his forces in the neighbourhood of Königgrätz, a fortified town on the upper Elbe, there to await the climax which he knew could not be long delayed, yet still uncertain whether to risk his fortunes upon offensive or defensive action.

During the last few days of June the Austrians had lost in killed, wounded, and prisoners no fewer than $30,000 men, against an estimated Prussian loss of barely half the number. Discouraged by repeated reverses and anxious as to what the morrow might bring forth, Benedek, brave and gallant soldier though he was, failed in the critical moment. Fearing the issue of a decisive encounter, he penned on July 1st perhaps the most pathetic message ever addressed from the battlefield by a general to his Sovereign: "I urgently entreat your Majesty to conclude peace at any price. A catastrophe is inevitable." The reply sent from the Hofburg was that the conclusion of peace was impossible, but that if retreat was unavoidable he must execute it decently and in order. In the hope of releasing the army imprisoned in the South, however, the Emperor simultaneously telegraphed to Napoleon inviting him to mediate between him and Victor Emmanuel, hoping that if Italy could be induced to withdraw from the war the conditions in the North would become more equal. The price which he was prepared to pay was the cession of Venetia.

His army having been recruited by two days of rest and his own hopes having revived, Benedek prepared to meet his fate. On July 3rd

was fought the battle of Königgrätz, called also by the name Sadowa, which ended in a decisive victory for the invaders. Almost the entire forces on both sides were engaged, and numerically, therefore, the conditions were not unequal. The battle began at seven in the morning and lasted until late in the afternoon. The Prussians from the first secured the offensive, though more than once during the desperate encounter their onslaughts were brought to a standstill, and the Austrians answered by strong counter-attacks. Both sides fought with equal bravery, and to the point of exhaustion, insomuch that the victors were in no mood to make the most of their success, so that the Austrians were able to retire to a position of safety under cover of their brilliant artillery. The battle ended with a headlong flight of the beaten Austrians back to the Elbe and the fortress of Königgrätz, under cover of a gallant and indomitable body of cavalry, which in the trying ordeal never for a moment lost its nerve.

Bismarck, watching from afar the Prussian cuirassier regiments as they rode back in orderly array from the battlefield, instead of following on the heels of the retreating enemy, wondered whether he was the spectator of actual warfare or only of manœuvres. The truth was that the victors were unaware of the completeness of their victory or the demoralization of the enemy. The battle over, Moltke was down with fever, and in his absence initiative was weakened, and his generals were satisfied to rest for the moment upon the laurels already gained. Yet the needle-gun had wrought dreadful havoc. The Austrian losses in killed and wounded were about 30,000, besides 13,000 prisoners, while the Saxons lost about 1,600. The Prussian losses in killed, wounded, and missing were between 13,000 and 14,000. Next day the retreat was continued to Olmütz. The Bohemian war was at an end.

The fourth Chancellor of the German Empire, Prince Bülow, writing nearly fifty years after the event, described the victory of Sadowa as “a triumph of discipline.” It was that, but it was also a triumph of military organization. Military writers have adversely criticized Moltke’s strategy during the war, and it is certain that the slackness of the Austrian higher command helped him on more than one critical occasion. The Prussian military machine itself, however, proved singularly efficient: both in the quality of their officers and men and in their material equipment the invading armies had every

advantage in their favour. Against an enemy so scientifically organized, the Austrian forces, gallantly though they fought, had no chance. Bismarck had said not long before, while the issue of war still hung in the balance: "Foreign Cabinets and nations underestimate us; but the world will see with astonishment what an assertion of power the despised Prussia is capable of." Already his words had come true. In one detail the Prussian military schemes miscarried, as they deserved to do. Prussian agents, directed by Count Usedom, did their best to tie Austria's hands by fomenting revolution in Hungary. A far-going plot was hatched, money was available in abundance, and it was proposed that Italian troops – a miscellaneous volunteer army which had gathered round Garibaldi – should move into Hungary to support the movement. It was neither a creditable nor a very ingenious piece of strategy; but that it failed was due to no saving of effort on Bismarck's part, but rather to the refusal of the Italian General La Marmora to be associated with warfare of the kind. Through Count Usedom, Bismarck had maintained communication with prominent Hungarian *émigrés* – Kossuth, Türr, Klapka, Czaki, and others – ever since he became Minister- President, believing that when the inevitable struggle between the two German Powers came Hungary might be induced to play an important part in Prussia's favour. Active propaganda had been carried on through them in the disaffected kingdom from the time that war became imminent, and Bismarck was sanguine as to the results. To Count Scherr-Thoss he said: "I do not ignore the value which Hungary's help may have for us. . . . If we conquer, however, Hungary will also be free."

At an early stage of the war the efforts of Generals Klapka and Türr to recruit Hungarian and other insurgents against Austria seemed to promise success. Klapka, a revolutionary of 1848, was to raise a rebel corps in Hungary, and Türr, one of Garibaldi's army which landed in Sicily in May, 1860, was to operate on similar lines in Serbia and Roumania. The idea was Bismarck's, and it was a source of distress to honourable soldiers, though the King, for once disowning his truer instincts, allowed himself to be overborne by political considerations. Klapka formed the nucleus of a revolutionary force by recruiting volunteers from amongst the Hungarian prisoners of war, and by attractive offers succeeded in raising a body of 2,000 men.

Kossuth, who knew the difference between honourable and

dishonourable revolutions, called the Klapka adventure a "ridiculous fiasco." In effect it achieved no military purpose, while casting discredit upon its author and his instruments. Klapka's hope to incite his countrymen to insurrection failed lamentably: for though he crossed into Hungary, not a man rose to his call, and throughout the whole campaign the population of the disaffected kingdom remained tranquil. Soon desertion set in amongst Klapka's officers, and even more amongst the unsavoury rank and file, and when he heard in August that an Austrian force was in pursuit of him he hastily withdrew to the safety of Prussian cover, fearful of the doom that in war-time awaits traitors. The Hungarian Legion cost Prussia in money, from first to last, the trifle of a quarter of a million thalers, but the loss to her and Bismarck's reputation was more serious. Austria deeply resented these attempts to tamper with the loyalty of the Hungarians as not playing the game. In marked contrast to them was the action of La Marmora, who, when the war broke out, despatched into Central Italy the legion of deserters from Hungarian regiments which had been formed in the Italian army since 1859.

To make Benedek's defeat more galling, Archduke Albrecht had on June 24th shattered the Italian army under La Marmora at Custozza, at the first meeting, and put it out of action. Nothing is easier than magnanimity in the presence of success, and Moltke was generous in his criticism of the generalship which lost the battle of Sadowa; it was chance, he said, that had turned the scales. To Benedek, however, the praise of his victors brought no consolation. He wrote at once to the Emperor approving by anticipation any judgment and any punishment that might be passed upon his disastrous conduct of the campaign; whether it were trial by court martial, imprisonment, degradation in rank, or dismissal, he would accept the award without murmur. The ungenerous treatment which he received, nevertheless, put his stoical fortitude to a cruel test.

Happily for Benedek's shattered troops, the Prussians did not press their advantage, though the way to Vienna lay open before them, and had they pushed forward they would have met with no serious resistance. Now it was that Napoleon called "Halt!" much to the disgust of William I and his Headquarters Staff.

On the morrow of Königgrätz the Austrian Emperor had repeated his invitation to Napoleon to mediate, and empowered him to settle

all details relating to the cession of Venetia. It was a *rôle* which Napoleon had from the beginning hoped to fill, however the fortunes of war might go, and Prussia's success had given him a new and powerful reason for intervention, for it was a reminder that a dangerous rival had appeared on the scene. Sadowa had suggested an alarming possibility – the possibility of Austria being reduced to the level of a third rate State, with consequences menacing to France and the political equilibrium of Europe. In order that this danger might be averted Austria must be saved from undue pressure. There was no time to lose, for unless he moved quickly it seemed likely that the function of mediator, which it was now more important than ever that he should discharge, would be wrested from his grasp, and he would have to stand aside, ignored and humiliated, after all his pompous words.

On July 5th, therefore, with the concurrence of Mensdorff, the Emperor telegraphed to the King of Prussia and Victor Emmanuel his wish to mediate between them and their enemy, simultaneously publishing his decision in the *Moniteur*, together with the fact of the cession of Venetia to France in trust for Italy. To William I he appealed in the name of friendship and generosity. "I know too well," he said, "your Majesty's magnanimous sentiments and cordial confidence towards me not to believe that after having elevated so high the honour of your arms you would receive with satisfaction the efforts which I wish to make to assist in restoring to your States and to Europe the precious boon of peace." However prettily this was said, it was not true. For the King was not feeling in the least magnanimous or disposed to peace. Only on Bismarck's pressing advice did he accept the offer, influenced by the fear that if Napoleon's *protégé* were pressed too hard effective aid might reach him by way of the Rhine. Nevertheless, neither King nor Minister ever forgave Napoleon for interfering. Bismarck said to his secretaries Abeken and Keudell at the time: "I predict that in a few years Napoleon will regret having taken sides against us."

Italy at first refused to cease hostilities, since she was bent on redeeming the defeat of Custozza, and so of gaining Venetia as a prize of war instead of as a gift, and only when Prussia had brought pressure to bear on the King, and Napoleon had threatened to send a French fleet to Venice, was the refusal withdrawn. The stipulation of

the Prusso-Italian treaty of alliance, that neither of the allies should lay down arms independently of the other, had been ignored by Italy's ally. Italy had as little to do with the conclusion of the succeeding peace as she had in 1859, when Napoleon stopped the war with Austria at Villafranca.

An armistice was concluded and negotiations over terms of peace were opened at Nikolsburg, Mensdorff's castle in Moravia. There Bismarck had around him a devoted band of secretaries and assistants, each one in his way irreplaceable – Abeken, the scribe, and confidant of both King and Minister; Thile, the discreet Under-Secretary; Keudell, the David whose music could banish the chief's evil spirits; and Lothar Bucher, the handyman, whose mastery of languages fitted him for service in any part of the world. From Nikolsburg Abeken wrote: "History will praise us for our moderation in not being at Vienna at this time, and it is pleasing to God that we are not there." It was certainly pleasing to Napoleon, and it was also due to him, for the King, had he been allowed, would only too readily have led his troops into the imperial city. He had, as Bismarck said later, counted on a triumphal entry into Vienna, "in the Napoleonic style." Even Moltke, however, with all his bellicosity, had opposed this idea as absurd. Answering one of his staff who seemed impatient to enter the capital, he said: "And what would you do when you got there?"

The difficulty was to keep the demands of the generals within moderate limits, for patriotic passions had been superheated and political ambitions inordinately whetted by victory. There was a general disposition amongst these men to magnify recent successes and to think that they justified resort to the severest reprisals. Not satisfied with having brought Austria to her knees, they wanted to continue their blows until the victim lay broken in the dust. "All is well with us," Bismarck wrote to his wife on July 9th, "and if we are not extravagant in our demands and do not believe that we have conquered the world we shall get a peace worth having. But we are as quickly intoxicated as dejected, and it is my thankless task to pour water in the foaming wine and to make it clear that we are not the only people in Europe, but that there are our three neighbours to think of." This mood of exaltation had taken hold of the King, to his Minister's alarm. Of the King's landhunger he once said: "After the Gastein convention and the occupation of Lauenburg, the first

addition made to the kingdom under King William, his frame of mind, so far as I could judge, underwent a psychological change; he developed a taste for conquest." Incited now by the military party, the King seemed bent on gaining for Prussia the utmost possible advantage, and he frowned when Bismarck warned him against excessive demands.

Bismarck had sent Prince Reuss to Paris in order to convey his views at first hand to Napoleon, and to strengthen the counsels of Count Goltz, the ambassador there. It was to be the business of the two diplomats to reconcile the Emperor to Prussia's conditions, and to listen to, without endorsing, whatever he might have to say on the vexed question of compensations. Goltz had on his side the influence of Prince Napoleon, Rouher, and La Valette (Minister of the Interior), while there was against him the more active influence of Drouyn de Lhuys, Walewski, the Duc de Gramont, and the Empress, supported by the Senate, who were all bent on resisting to the last Prussian aggression in Germany. Goltz had been charged with maximum as well as minimum demands, the former to be bargained with, the latter to be pressed at all costs. Bismarck's irreducible terms comprised the extrusion of Austria from Germany, the federation of the North under Prussian leadership, the abandonment by Austria to Prussia of her rights in Schleswig and Holstein, and cessions of territory by Hanover, Saxony, and the other occupied States. With South Germany he wished for the present to have nothing to do, for he was as convinced as the King himself that the cause of national unity would make surer and speedier progress if as a beginning federation were confined to the North.

"If Napoleon," he had told Prince Reuss, "should not show himself agreeable to our propositions, and intend to oppose our plans, and thus drive us to extremes, you are to give him to understand that we are prepared to light up a conflagration in Germany. Napoleon will see that he is mistaken if he reckons upon the help of revolution in Germany."

From the first, however, the Emperor made no difficulties. More or less half-heartedly he produced several impossible counter-proposals, such as the creation of two federal parliaments, for the North and the South, the exclusion of Saxony from the Northern union, and even the cession to that kingdom of the Rhine Province, but these he readily

abandoned. On the other hand, Goltz received sympathetically his proposal that the States of the South should form an independent international union, to be connected with the Northern federation "*sur des bases qui seront reglées par une entente commune des États allemands*."

The delicate negotiations were not advanced by the fact that Goltz's earliest instructions were from time to time modified in accordance with the changing situation at the seat of war. Writing to Count Bernstorff from Paris, the ambassador told how the first conditions of peace, as communicated to him by Bismarck, were again and again "reversed by later telegrams, announcing a growing appetite at every halting-place." Before long the King was demanding that Austria should cede the remnant of Silesia and part of Bohemia, while of the German States which had fought on her side some were to be annexed outright and the others, including Bavaria and Saxony, were to make a large surrender of territory. He talked, indeed, of asserting for Prussia "supremacy over all Germany." Moltke played up to this spirit of aggression, and was even prepared to begin a war against France at once if Napoleon carried provocation too far.

Never did Bismarck exert his despotic will to wiser purpose than when he insisted upon the paramount duty of moderation, an attitude in which he was warmly supported by the Crown Prince. On leaving the battlefield he had said to the King: "The dispute with Austria is decided; now we have to win back the old friendship." That was motive sufficient, but another consideration, equally strong, was the danger of embroiling France and alienating European opinion, never too friendly to Prussian aspirations.

On the whole Bismarck had little reason to complain of Napoleon's attitude to the proposed peace conditions. Only one serious obstacle held back agreement, and that was the satisfaction of the French claims for compensation. The Emperor had acted the part of an industrious middleman, and every labourer was worthy of his hire; what might he expect in return? Here Goltz was without a brief: all he could do was to receive the proffered suggestions sympathetically and duly report them to his chief. In the absence of a more definite result, therefore, Benedetti was instructed to visit the Prussian headquarters in Bohemia. Accordingly, in the middle of July the ambassador appeared at Nikolsburg, bearing a despatch in which Drouyn de

Lhuys, while professing unwillingness to complicate matters at that late stage, gave him to understand that Napoleon could only assent to the proposed annexations if France, too, received a consideration, and he suggested a slice of territory on the left bank of the Rhine.

In his story of this episode Benedetti tries to make it appear that his arrival at the Prussian headquarters was welcome and that his overtures were opportune. It is evident from Bismarck's later utterances and from the contemporary reports of those around him, that the French ambassador was regarded as a bore, his presence as an untimely intrusion, and his proposals as embarrassing. Benedetti having appeared, how ever, all that Bismarck thought of was how to get rid of him, and on his side the object of the discussions, which lasted far into the first night and were continued next day and for many days, was rather to stave off than bring about any practical result. Benedetti remained at Nikolsburg about a fortnight, giving Bismarck no rest, and clamouring with increasing urgency for the settlement of Napoleon's little account, not indeed insisting that he must take the money away with him, but willing to accept a bill, to be honoured at a later date. The concession asked for was one which Bismarck, in spite of all his past disingenuous promises, was not, and never had been, either willing or able to make. For the present, therefore, it was to his interest to prolong Napoleon's uncertainty as long as possible, and find an excuse for deferring a definitive answer until Prussia, having disposed of her old enemy, should be free to negotiate on more advantageous terms. This he succeeded once more in doing, and Benedetti, to his mortification, went away with fresh promises, but with nothing else. It was one more masterly illustration of Bismarck's policy of "treating dilatorily" questions which were not ripe or opportune for settlement. The sequel will be told in a later chapter.

An event occurred on July 24th which decided Bismarck to complete the negotiations without delay. A telegram from the Prussian ambassador in St. Petersburg warned him that the Czar was anxious for a conference of the Powers, on the ground that as the questions which were being discussed at Nikolsburg involved the subversion of the European settlement of 1815, they should not be decided without regard to the neutral States. Apprehensive of the result of procrastination, Bismarck urgently begged the King to be satisfied

with the concessions he had already obtained from France and not to give Napoleon time to change his mind. “We cannot,” he said, “rely on the other Great Powers supporting Prussia in greater demands, nor even in these.” But the King was inordinately greedy. “It is a question,” he said, “of getting as much money and territory as we can without risking everything.” It had already been agreed that Prussia should annex, besides the Elbe duchies, the entire kingdom of Hanover, electoral Hesse, all but the northern part of Hesse-Darmstadt, and Nassau, with Frankfort. So liberally recompensed for a campaign which had really been little more than a *promenade militaire*, Bismarck declared that it would be for Prussia “a political blunder” to attempt to gain a few million thalers more from Austria or a few square miles more territory from her German allies. It was only the interposition of the Crown Prince that finally overbore intemperate demands. “Speak in the name of the future,” said the King, turning to his son, when a critical council threatened to end in a deadlock.

The Crown Prince, who had led Germans against Germans against his will, declared for moderation and no further annexations, and the King capitulated, though still unwillingly.

Recording this episode, Sybel writes: “It will be difficult for posterity to judge otherwise than that such a relation between Monarch and Minister, such a combination of consciousness of victory and moderation, such a union of self-restraint and genius, has seldom appeared in history.” But it is necessary to add that the moderation, self-restraint, and perspicacity were altogether on Bismarck’s side. Had the King had his way, he might have wrecked the peace, tempted France to form a new combination against Prussia, and lost everything by trying to grasp too much. The anti-Prussian party in Paris, incited by the *Duc de Gramont*, was, in fact, at this time urging Napoleon to make a military demonstration on the Rhine and assuring him that thus “without war, without a fight, without danger and without loss” he would be able to dictate terms, since “if Prussia holds Austria, Austria holds Prussia.” Referring to this possibility in later years, Bismarck admitted (January 16, 1874) that even a small French force, united with the South German army, would at that critical juncture have “compelled us to cover Berlin and abandon our successes in Austria.” How much credit was due to the King for the generous terms offered to Austria is shown by the marginal comment which he added

to a memorandum on the subject hastily drawn up by his anxious Minister. “Inasmuch,” he wrote, “as my Minister-President has left me in the lurch, and I am not in a position to replace him, I have discussed the matter with my son, and as he shares the views of the Minister-President I find myself, to my sorrow, compelled, after the army’s brilliant victory, to bite into this sour apple and to accept this shameful peace.” Bismarck relates that the King wept with vexation at Nikolsburg when he was not allowed to continue the war.

Bismarck was wont to claim in later years that his moderation in the treatment of Austria was due solely to a desire to make a new friend out of an old antagonist. That was to be the effect of his policy, but it was not its only or its principal cause. Prudential considerations played a decisive part. Several of these considerations have been mentioned, but there were others. He knew well that the appropriation of Austrian territory would have meant the addition to Prussia of a Slavic or at least of a Roman Catholic population, in either case an element of serious political danger. Not only so, but he was too far-sighted to ignore the fact that there was a point beyond which it would be dangerous to force humiliation upon the beaten foe. In calculating the weight of Austria’s penalty, he had to reckon not only with Napoleon but with European opinion. He knew – no one better – that the Great Powers would not tolerate the extinction or even the undue weakening of the Austrian Empire, and that to attempt any changes which would disturb the existing equilibrium in favour of Prussia and the new Germany which was coming would be suicidal. So anxious was he as to the Czar’s attitude in particular that at the beginning of August he despatched on a special mission to St. Petersburg General von Mantcuffel, a favourite at the Russian Court, with instructions to reassure him of Prussia’s determination to adhere to the line of moderation. To which let it be added that Francis Joseph was kept fully acquainted with the pressure which was being applied to Prussia in and from Paris, and that at one time in July it seemed likely that he would abruptly refuse Bismarck’s demands, break off the negotiations, and try his fortunes again in war. Finally, typhus and cholera had broken out in the victorious army, and the season was favourable to their spread.

In the Preliminaries of Peace, as signed on July 26th and ratified two days later, Prussia offered and Austria accepted conditions

substantially as Napoleon had approved them. The principal stipulations were that Austria should assent to the dissolution of the Germanic Federation and to exclusion from Germany as reorganized, renounce to Prussia her rights in Schleswig and Holstein, acknowledge the annexations which that State proposed to make in North Germany, and bear part of the costs of the war. The integrity of Austria was to be respected. There was much haggling over the indemnity question. Bismarck began by demanding a total sum of a hundred million thalers £15,000,000), of which Austria was to pay one half, reducible by fifteen millions to be required from Schleswig- Holstein as part of the war-bill of 1864, leaving a net penalty of thirty-five million thalers. In his draft, however, he had set down forty and not fifty millions as the gross sum to be expected from Austria, the difference being a margin upon which to bargain. Accordingly, when Austria protested he moderated his demand first to forty-five, then to forty, and finally to thirty-five millions, reducible to twenty millions by the payment due from Schleswig-Holstein. With creditable chivalry, Austria firmly opposed the annexation of any part of Saxony, the only one of the German States which had stood staunchly by her and the Federation, her plenipotentiary declaring in the Emperor's name that he would rather resort to arms again than sacrifice so faithful an ally. Bismarck thought such an attitude quixotic, but he respected it, and, rather than imperil peace, he agreed. On the other hand, he resolutely refused to assent to the proposal, also made by Austria, that Saxony should be excluded from the North German union of States.

No other German State was mentioned in the treaty; all the rest of Prussia's enemies were left to bargain with the victor as best they might. Bavaria tried to come into the Nikolsburg agreement, but was repelled. "Do you know that I might make you a prisoner of war?" said Bismarck wrathfully to Baron von der Pfordten, when that Minister turned up one day, unsought and without a safe conduct, at the Prussian headquarters. The daring envoy beat a hasty retreat, and was seen no more. It would not appear, however, that Bismarck's brusque reception depressed him unduly, for the re port which he conveyed to King Ludwig was such as to draw from him the prompt comment, "All is well, so now I can venture to recall Richard Wagner!"

The preliminaries of Nikolsburg were confirmed in substantially

the same form in the Peace of Prague, signed on August 23rd, the fourth article of which ran: "The Emperor of Austria acknowledges the dissolution of the Germanic Federation as hitherto existing, and gives his assent to a new organization of Germany, in which the Austrian Imperial State shall not participate. He also promises to recognize the closer federation which the King of Prussia intends to establish north of the Main, and agrees that the German States lying south of that line shall be free to enter together into a union whose national connection with the North German Confederation shall be a matter of later agreement between both sides, and which shall have an international and independent existence." Austria also ceded to Prussia all rights in respect of Schleswig and Holstein accruing to her in virtue of the Treaty of Vienna of October 30, 1864, subject to the condition that "the populations of the northern districts of Schleswig, if they of their free will advance the desire to be united to Denmark, shall be ceded to that State."

On the day that the Peace of Prague was signed the Federal Diet, which, though now reduced to a handful of members, had pretended to prolong its inglorious career at Augsburg, held its last sitting. The German peoples saw unmoved the end of the Bund and its once arrogant but now humbled executive; they had brought much ill and little good to the national life, and their extinction was at least a negative gain. A separate peace was concluded between Austria and Italy, and the treaty embodying its terms was signed in Vienna on October 3rd. By it Venetia was ceded to the new kingdom.

Prussia was free to settle accounts with the hostile German States at leisure. Having but a poor opinion of the South Germans and their war preparations, Moltke's plan had been to concentrate all his strength upon their ally. "Therein," says the Prussian official history of the war, "lay the key of the whole position. A victory over the Austrian army would paralyse all the other enemies." This calculation was abundantly justified, for the opposition offered by the hostile German States was never serious, and while the Nikolsburg negotiations were in progress it flickered out ignominiously. A force of 45,000 Prussians, increased by contingents from Oldenburg, Mecklenburg, and other smaller States to 80,000, had been left behind to suppress Austria's, South German allies if they ventured to show fight, which for the most part they were loath to do. Isolated

skirmishes occurred throughout July, until, weary of being driven from pillar to post, the allies invoked the good offices of Napoleon and the Czar. Finally, an urgent appeal for peace was addressed to the King of Prussia, and it was granted on August 2nd.

The opponents of the war had predicted for it a duration of months or of years – Prince Hohenlohe feared that it would be "very long and very sanguinary," while Moritz Mohl, the Würtemberg publicist, believed that it would last for a generation – yet it was over in seven weeks.

On August 5th Bismarck invited the South German Governments to send plenipotentiaries to Berlin to discuss the conditions of peace, and all sent their Foreign Ministers; Bavaria was represented by Baron von der Pfordten, *Würtemberg* by Baron Varnbüler, *Baden* by Herr von Freydorf, and *Hesse- Darmstadt* by Herr von Dalwigk. All the States able to secure influence amongst the Powers had done so. Russia had spoken a good word for Würtemberg and Hesse; Austria and France had both pleaded for Saxony; the Prussian King himself was the protector of Baden, and had bidden his Minister deal gently with his son-in-law the Grand Duke; only Bavaria, in the time of its extremity, was without a friend.

Bavaria wished for collective negotiations, but Bismarck refused the request point-blank, and treated first with Würtemberg and Baden. From Würtemberg, though it had been specially truculent when the war broke out, he required no cession of territory, but only the payment of eight million gulden (£670,000) by way of contribution to Prussia's war costs, together with the acceptance of the preliminaries of peace as concluded with Austria, in so far as they affected the South German States and their future relationships with each other, and the conclusion of customs and railway conventions with Prussia.

In the case of Baden the conditions were the same, except that the war-bill was only six million gulden (£500,000). The King of Prussia wished this amount to be reduced, on the ground that the Grand Duke had been compelled to go to war against his will by a rebellious and stiff-necked people. Bismarck drily reminded him that it was the people who would have to pay the bill, and the penalty stood.

The Preliminaries of Peace stipulated that the Southern States should be free to form a union of their own, but the Würtemberg and Baden plenipotentiaries pleaded that no attempt should be made to

force their hands in the matter. Bismarck willingly agreed that they should be left to do as they pleased, since he had no desire to see the federation come into existence.

A further demand imposed upon Würtemberg and Baden, and later upon Bavaria and Hesse, seriously, restricted the practical value of this option, for each of these States was required to enter into a defensive and offensive alliance with Prussia by the terms of which the signatories guaranteed to each other the integrity of their territories and undertook "in case of war" to pool their complete military strength for that purpose, the combined force to be under the command of the King of Prussia. A specific *casus faderis* was neither defined nor mentioned in the treaties, which were concluded for an indefinite period, and for the present were to remain secret.

It was not intended that Bavaria and Hesse-Darmstadt should be let off so easily. With these States Bismarck negotiated together, inasmuch as territorial readjustments were contemplated in both cases. King William had in particular set his heart upon regaining the districts of Anspach and Bayreuth, which were transferred from Prussia to Bavaria in 1815, and Hesse was to have ceded a slice of territory to its neighbour by way of compensation. The Bavarian and Hessian Ministers bitterly protested against such harsh treatment, and entreated the French ambassador to urge Napoleon to intervene in order to save them from this humiliation. When the French Government accordingly made representations to Berlin on the subject, Bismarck relented. Calling Baron von der Pfordten to him, he first talked for some time as though contemplating no concession. Then, having sufficiently tormented his victim, he suddenly altered his tactics, and producing Napoleon's latest scheme of spoliation, proposing the annexation of the Palatinate, he put it into Pfordten's hand. As soon as the bewildered Baron had recovered from the shock he was invited to say frankly which country he would trust in future – France or Prussia. The answer was not doubtful. The demand for territory – except for a small strip of land needed for the rectification of Prussia's frontier – having been withdrawn, the Bavarian Minister gladly entered into the military alliance and agreed to a war-bill of thirty million gulden (£2,500,000).

Hesse-Darmstadt, besides paying a contribution of three million gulden (£250,000), lost a large part of the province of Upper Hesse,

the landgraviate of Hesse-Homburg (this being offered as a solatium to the cousin and successor of the dethroned Elector of Hesse-Cassel), and the fortress of Mayence. Further, it was stipulated that the remaining portion of the Grand Duchy north of the Main should enter the contemplated North German Confederation, the Grand Duke placing his troops under the command of the King of Prussia.

Annexations in North Germany were in Bismarck's mind when he proposed the reform of the federal constitution in June: there was to be a new union composed of fewer members. In a letter written to the Duke of Coburg he had compared Prussia with Rome, and, recalling how the ancient Empire had not been consolidated without "earning considerable odium by the rape of the Sabines," had said that the Germanic Rome of the future would be unable to avoid similar acts of violence, though he would "like to see them reduced to a minimum, leaving the rest to time." The territories wholly added to Prussia, beside Schleswig-Holstein, were electoral Hesse, which had been a perpetual thorn in her side; Nassau, which likewise had been a quarrelsome neighbour, ostentatious in its devotion to Austria; Hanover, and the Free City of Frankfort.

The absorption of Frankfort was a foregone conclusion, and was the climax of a course of harsh and ungenerous treatment, in which Bismarck's hand was plainly revealed. He had not forgotten how often the authorities and population of the Free City had been at pains to show that their sympathies were rather with the Southern than the Northern monarchy, and how in particular, when on the outbreak of war the troops of the rival States evacuated the garrison, the Austrians marched forth amid popular ovations, the Prussians in icy silence.

No sooner had the Prussians entered the city than they exacted bitter amends for its too ostentatious display of Austrian sympathies. General Falckenstein made an immediate war-levy of nearly half a million pounds upon the public treasury, and when General Manteuffel – the same who had ruled with a high hand in Schleswig – succeeded him, a further levy of over a million and a half pounds was demanded on conditions so impossible of fulfilment that the Mayor of the city, in despair, committed suicide. Unable to meet the exactions of its masters, the city sought the intervention of the Queen of Prussia, and at her solicitation the King ordered the moderation of the harsh tribute. Other vexatious demands were, however, imposed; the best of

the private houses were converted into billets for the soldiers, who lived on the fat of the land, and the municipal officers were subjected to great indignity.

By the loss of his throne the blind King George V of Hanover paid the penalty not only of his own but of his predecessor's miscalculations. He had chosen to be on the wrong side in the late war, and his action in so doing had been the logical consequence of his earlier hostility to Prussia and his unwillingness to act as postilion on a national coach of which a Hohenzollern was to be the driver. Throughout the history of the Germanic Federation, however, Hanover had distinguished itself by attachment to Austria, and a constant and at times arrogant opposition to Prussia and the Prussian view of things. It was also Hanover's misfortune that it stood geographically in the way of a consolidated Prussian kingdom. Cutting deep into the heart of that kingdom the Guelphic lands had long been a Naboth's vineyard in the eyes of the Hohenzollerns. Sixty years before, by agreement with Napoleon, they had for a short time been in Prussian occupation, and William I had never concealed his desire to see them again part of his monarchy. Now that Hanover's fate had been committed to the fortunes of war he could at least plead that its ruler had brought disaster upon himself by neglecting a fair warning. In throwing down the boundary posts surrounding the Guelphic enclave, King William carried his sway to the Dutch frontier, and gave Prussia a wide front on the North Sea.

The Crown Prince of Hanover was offered the succession to the duchy of Brunswick, an appanage of the Crown, provided both father and son would agree to renounce all claim to the appropriated kingdom. As they refused, Brunswick, without losing its independence, was placed under a Prussian Regent. The Czar had warmly interceded on behalf of Hanover's high spirited ruler, but in vain. The King's reply (August 20th) seemed to confirm to the full the fears which had perpetually haunted the smaller States in all their relations with the northern kingdom.

"Believe me," he wrote, "nothing has more injured the monarchical principle in Germany than the existence of these small and impotent dynasties, which eke out their existence at the expense of the national interests, insufficiently discharge their sovereign duties, and compromise the reputation of the monarchical principle

just in the same way that a large and poor nobility does that of the aristocracy. Public opinion is penetrated by the conviction that these small monarchies stand in natural and necessary opposition to the national interest."

Referring, in the same letter, to the Czar's fears as to where the promised national parliament might lead, he said: "I shall oppose revolution in Germany in the future as in the past, and shall no more subordinate myself to the exaggerated pretensions of a German Parliament than to those of the Prussian Diet."

Of his own relations to the Czar the King wrote: "Nothing is nearer to my heart than the strengthening of the tie which unites us. In none of my political combinations shall Russia's interests be injured; on the contrary, I shall esteem myself happy if I should be able in the future to find an opportunity of proving that I ever regard these interests as those of the oldest and most trusted ally of Prussia."

Of the dethroned rulers, the King of Hanover was the one who accepted his fate with least resignation. As he refused to come to terms on the dissolution of the kingdom his estate and privy fund were sequestered. Later in the year both England and Russia pressed the Prussian Government to devise some compromise. Bismarck proposed that in consideration of the King's renouncing the throne and repaying twenty-three million thalers (£3,450,000) of State money which he had sent to England, there should be paid to him an annuity of 700,000 thalers (£105,000) instead of his former civil list of 400,000 thalers (£60,000) derived from domains, and that this annuity should be secured on a capital of sixteen million thalers (£2,400,000), to be duly invested. He was also to retain a large private fortune invested abroad, and to be assigned certain castles and domains. As he still refused to renounce his rights as ruler, Bismarck did not press this condition, and the agreement was concluded without it and signed in September. As later, however, the King took part in dynastic agitations to the extent of financing a legion of Hanoverian and other soldiers pledged to the Guelph cause, the annuity was suspended. The Guelph Legion was maintained until 1870, when it was disbanded, each man receiving a payment of 400 francs wherewith to emigrate. The sequestered monies were officially known as the "fund for the combating of hostile Guelph endeavours against Prussia." Owing to the crooked use made of it – the bribery of

newspapers, the payment of secret agents, and the maintenance of an elaborate system of espionage – it later became notorious in political life as the "Reptile fund." Adequate revenues upon which to support their establishment and dignity were also assigned to the other deposed rulers – to the Duke of Nassau £1,285,000 and to the Elector of Hesse £1,200,000, besides castles and estates.

The last of the treaties of peace to be concluded was that with Saxony (October 21st), which came out of the ordeal with the credit it deserved. Saxony agreed to join the alliance of the North German States, to reorganize its troops, which were to form an integral part of the new federal army and be under the chief command of the King of Prussia, and to pay ten million thalers (£1,500,000) towards Prussia's war costs; but it was allowed to retain its existing diplomatic representation, and the integrity of the kingdom remained intact. The Saxon Minister-President, Beust, whose attachment to Austria was passionate, had imported into his attitude to Prussia a bitterness of temper which the King did not share. His personal relations with Bismarck were also very strained, so that it was intimated to Dresden that the peace negotiations would fare better if he were kept out of them. Beust in consequence had tendered his resignation in August. In truth his position at home had been compromised from the first moment of his country's defeat, the grievance against him being, not that he had loved Saxony too little, but that he had loved Austria too well. Two months later (October 30th) he entered service under the Austrian Emperor, first as Foreign Minister. This change from the wings to the footlights of the stage was in every respect welcome to him, and his long-cherished desire to occupy in the larger sphere of European politics the prominent place for which he believed his talents qualified him was for a short time gratified. In the following February he succeeded Belcredi as head of the Ministry, and in June he was created a Count and received the title Chancellor of the Empire, a title previously held only by Kaunitz and Metternich.

The absorption by Prussia of four German States as the result of a war which most people, even at that day, regarded as having been forced upon her adversary, was not witnessed without compunction by the feudalist Conservatives, the party to which Bismarck himself had belonged. They saw in the annexations a wilful violation of the sacred principle of legitimism, and one of their number, the downright

Gerlach, did not hesitate to remind Bismarck that the commandment "Thou shalt not steal!" was intended to apply just as much to the territories of Germany's Princes as to the chattels of her peasants. By the annexations (including Schleswig and Holstein) an addition of 1,306 German (or 27,758 English) square miles was made to the area of Prussia and an addition of four and a third millions to her population, which now numbered nearly twenty- four millions. More important than the expansion of Prussia, however, was the fact that in the throes of the conflict now ended the whole German nation was brought nearer to the final act of unity and consolidation.

Warfare was cheap in those days. Probably no war yielding to the conquering nation such substantial advantages was waged at so small a cost as the campaign of 1866. The total cost to Prussia of the operations in Bohemia and Germany was about fourteen million pounds, and of this sum two-thirds were paid back by the conquered States. Friedjung estimates the cost of the war to Austria at 215 ½ million gulden (about £18,000,000), against which she received thirty-five million gulden (about £2,500,000) from Italy as the share of the latter in the public debt of Venetia.

One of the immediate results of the war was the conclusion of the constitutional struggle which since 1862 had created discord and confusion in Prussian political life. The Diet had been re-elected on July 3rd, with results which showed that the old spirit of conflict was weakening; a hundred Conservatives were returned where several years before there were barely a dozen, and the Progressists had decreased proportionately, though the moderate Liberals held the balance. The brilliant issue of the late campaign and the steps now being taken to form a North German Confederation were facts so large as to throw purely domestic questions into the background and make parliamentary frictions appear incongruous and trivial. The Government and the Diet both wanted peace, while the nation, elated by victory, was in no mood for quarrelling further over fine points of constitutional theory. Nor could it be doubted that this victory was in part a result of the very scheme of army reorganization which the constitutionalists had fought tooth and nail, not because they disapproved of army reform in itself, but because they differed from the Government as to the method of carrying it out.

Before the Diet reassembled there was a violent dispute in the

Cabinet over the question whether or not it should seek an indemnity for its past unconstitutional methods of finance. While the war was still running its course Count Eulenburg, the Minister of the Interior, had drawn up a first draft of the speech to be read from the throne, and in it had proposed that "supplementary sanction" (*nachträgliche Gutheissung*) should be given to the irregular financial measures of the past four years. Eager to quieten the public mind and to prevent the recurrence of similar conflicts between the Crown and the Diet, he was even said to be willing to make the constitutional theory of Ministerial responsibility a reality.

The proposal to seek an indemnity in any form was, however, resisted by the other Conservative Ministers, and chiefly by Count Lippe, the Minister of Justice, on the plea that after the army reorganization had been justified by its success it was for the Diet and not the Government to give way. Nevertheless, the majority authorized Herr von der Heydt, the Minister of Finance, to prepare an alternative draft explicitly mentioning the idea of indemnity instead of merely hinting at it. Bismarck, with Roon, was at the war at the time, and so long as he was absent the King refused to consider either surrender or compromise. In the end Bismarck persuaded him, but only after a severe struggle and by making astute use of the argument that to ask the Diet for an indemnity would be to invite it to confess itself in the wrong, and that in granting it the Diet and not the Government would be capitulating.

The Diet was opened on August 5th, and an indemnity was accordingly solicited – " so settling the dispute for all time" – in terms that breathed neither menace nor arrogance. Very different in temper was the King's answer to the address of the Lower House in reply to the speech from the throne. Most of the constitutionalists were willing to grant the indemnity desired, assuming that it had been asked for in sign of repentance. To their surprise the King began by praising the reorganization of the army, without which the late victories would not have been won; then coming to the question in dispute, he declared that it had been his duty, in the absence of a budget law, to follow his own course, and that he would do the same thing again if a similar situation happened again, though he added immediately: "But, gentlemen, it will not happen again." The effect of this speech was that while the Upper House adopted the Indemnity Bill unanimously,

the Lower House gave to it only a divided assent: there was a minority of 75 resolute dissentients against the 230 deputies in its favour.

In the majority were many Liberals who, like Twesten and Lasker, had hitherto refused any compromise on a question so vital to the maintenance of the rights of parliament, and to constitutional development. The minority was composed for the most part of men – prominent among them Jacoby, Waldeck, Schulze, and Virchow – far-sighted enough to perceive that the issue involved was far greater than the mere formal condonation of a Ministry which confessed that it had erred; that the question which was being decided was whether the constitutional movement should go forward or backward, whether the half-principles introduced in a constitution which was given in haste and repented ever afterwards should become petrified, and obstruct all further progress towards complete parliamentary government. In sealing that compact of accommodation and peace the Liberals who held the casting vote sealed the fate of their party and cause for over half a century. For it was true, as Bismarck had said, that the surrender was not the Government's but theirs. The Minister-President had put on the white sheet of penitence, but beneath it was still the cuirassier's uniform, emblematic of military domination present and to come. The Upper House voted the Indemnity Bill without demur, though the feudalists, with Kleist-Retzow as their spokesman, lamented the Government's weakness in proposing it.

The division in the Liberal ranks on this question had a permanent significance. The right wing of the Fortschritt, to the number of twenty-four, seceded and formed a new party with the name National Liberal, taking with it many able men who had fought long and resolutely for the popular cause, and whose attachment to progressive principles was still above suspicion. The best known of the seceders were Twesten, Bennigsen, Lasker, Forckenbeck, Unruh, Michaelis, and Hammacher. In the next Diet the new party formed a strong phalanx of a hundred.

Nor was the popular party the only one to be split over the indemnity question. The unconciliatory attitude of the extremer members of the Conservative party led likewise to a secession of which the outcome was the formation of the Free Conservative or Imperialist party. Honestly desirous at the time of exercising a liberalizing influence upon Conservative thought, this party soon

found that it had undertaken a task beyond its powers, though it has ever since preserved an independent existence.

There were further discords when the Government recommended to the Diet for reward a list of generals who had distinguished themselves in the field. A majority of the Lower House, endorsing the action of the committee to which the proposal had been referred, wished to add Bismarck to the list, and this was done in spite of the protests of the no-indemnity party, which demanded that the name of Roon, the Minister of War, should also be omitted.

One drop of gall, but a large and bitter one, fell into the goblet of national joy a little later. Napoleon never remained long in the background. For him Sadowa had been a rude awakening, and instead of concealing his disappointment at Prussia's success, he proclaimed it by word and sign to all the world. Just when Germany and Austria were beginning to settle down to their new life he broke silence and exercised his rare faculty for saying the wrong thing. In a speech from the throne on February 14, 1867, he once more recalled his sudden intervention in the war and said: "I have not armed one soldier more, I have not called out a single regiment, and yet the voice of France has had influence enough to hold back the victors at the gates of Vienna. Our mediation between the combatants has led to an agreement which, while giving to Prussia the fruits of victory, has preserved the integrity of the Austrian territory with the exception of one province (Venetia), and by the cession of this province has consummated Italian independence."

Though true, this boastful claim was no longer new, and it would have been better had it been repressed, for it deeply mortified German pride without bringing comfort to the countries which were smarting under defeat.

THE NORTH GERMAN CONFEDERATION, 1866-1867

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IT WAS ONE OF Bismarck's maxims of statecraft that questions which were either untoward or not ripe for action should be "treated dilatorily." That meant sometimes not treating them at all. On the other hand, no man had greater capacity for acting swiftly and decisively in emergencies, or was more conscious, in critical situations, of the importance of improving the opportunities and advantages of the moment. He had hurried to a conclusion the peace negotiations with Austria, on the principle of a settlement at any price, since delay meant danger. Now that the way was open for negotiation upon the question of federal reform he was equally resolved to lose no time, but to bind Prussia's willing and unwilling allies at once to the pledges of union which they had already given, lest they should spring upon him new difficulties.

Now for the first time he was face to face with the question of German unity in a practical form. It involved two separate problems. One related to the North German States, the form of the new union to be created, the organization of the necessary legislative and executive authorities, and the determination of their jurisdiction; the other and perhaps more difficult problem related to the future position of the States of the South, their relation to one another, to the union of the North, and to foreign Powers.

By the beginning of September (1866) the Sovereigns of most of the North German States had signified their willingness to enter the proposed Confederation and their acceptance of the convention which had been put forward as a basis of union. Backward States like the Mecklenburg s, which were still without constitutions and feared all innovations of the kind, hesitated, but the only really refractory members were the little duchy of Saxe-Meiningen, whose ruler had been deposed, and the still smaller principality of Reuss of the older line. The haughty attitude held towards Prussia by the Lady Disdain who ruled the destinies of the latter duodecimo State and the stubbornness with which she refused to bow to the victor's dictation deserved greater admiration than they received.

The majority of the States were incorporated in virtue of a treaty of August 18th: these were Prussia (including now, in addition to the old provinces, the kingdom of Hanover, electoral Hesse, the duchy of Nassau, the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein, the Free City of Frankfort, and the portions of Bavaria and the grand duchy of Hesse

ceded to the monarchy), Saxe- Weimar, Oldenburg, Brunswick, Saxe-Altenburg, Saxe-(Coburg- Gotha, Anhalt, Schwarzburg-Sondershausen, Schwarzburg- Rudolstadt, Waldeck, Reuss of the younger line, Schaumburg- Lippe, Lippe-Detmold, Lübeck, Bremen, and Hamburg. Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Mecklenburg-Strelitz joined in virtue of a treaty of alliance of August 21st, and later, by the treaties of peace concluded with them by, Prussia, there were added the grand duchy of Hesse for its territory lying north of the Main, Saxe-Meiningen, Reuss of the older line, and Saxony, making a total of twenty-two.

The Governments were invited in November to send plenipotentiaries to confer upon a draft constitution to be duly laid before a constituent Diet, and they met in Berlin from December 15th until February 9th following. Sybel says that Bismarck dictated the main lines of the draft in the afternoon of December 13th to his secretary, Lothar Bucher, that Bucher and Rudolph Delbrück elaborated these notes during the night, and that on the following day the draft was approved by the King and a council of Ministers. Bismarck's feat in draughtsmanship, though notable, was hardly so unique as this. Tentative drafts, made by different hands, were already lying about, and apart from these there was the laboriously wrought Frankfort constitution of 1848-9. From the material at his disposal Bismarck extracted the quintessence of its wisdom for what it was worth, yet it may fairly be said that the constitution as now drawn up for presentation to the federal Sovereigns was in substance no less his work than the Prussian Municipal Ordinance of 1808 was the work of Stein, who similarly and with great freedom used the labour of others.

Reserving for a later chapter a fuller exposition of the federal constitution of Germany, in the form in which it was amended when the North and the South were merged in the completed Empire, it will be sufficient to indicate here merely its broad outlines. These followed the proposals made to the Frankfort Diet by Prussia on June 10th, though some features were directly borrowed from the charter upon which the Frankfort National Assembly had worked so industriously and lovingly. The union was to be called the "North German Confederation" (*Norddeutscher Bund*), and was to consist of twenty-two States lying north of the river Main. The population of the federal territory was thirty millions, of whom twenty-five millions fell to Prussia alone. There was not to be an Emperor, as the Frankfort

Parliament wanted, for an Emperor of a part of Germany was unthinkable, but instead a President, or, more accurately, a Presidency (*Prüsidium*), vested in the King of Prussia, who cordially disliked the title as suggesting republican associations. While, however, the President of the old Bund had been a mere figurehead, a master of ceremonies, the head of the new Bund was to exercise far going powers.

No great inroad was to be made upon the independent sovereignty of the federal States. Sybel claims it as a "supreme virtue" on Bismarck's part that Prussia did not impose on all the small States, of which her ruler had so poor an opinion, "an unlimited despotic will." It was, however, wisdom even more than virtue that dictated moderation. For Prussia it might have seemed a matter of indifference how large a devolution of State affairs was made in favour of the Confederation, for what she gave with one hand she was certain to receive back with the other. The States in general, however, were not ready for any far-going measures, and to have attempted them would have been folly. Bismarck had promised that the sovereign rights of the States should not be unduly invaded, and he kept his word. Hamburg and Bremen even retained a free customs area. The Confederation was to take into its province foreign affairs and diplomacy, the questions of migration, citizenship and domicile, commerce, customs duties and taxation for federal purposes, weights, measures and coinage, with the issue of paper money, banking, patent law and the protection of intellectual property, consular representation, the railway system, merchant marine, inland navigation, the post and telegraph, penal and commercial law, judicial procedure, military and naval questions, and some other matters of common concern. Among the numerous questions left to the competence of the States as before were education, the relationships between State and Church, most departments of justice and the entire domain of civil law. The constitution had, as Bismarck said in his opening speech, "restricted itself to a due care for all the needs of a universal character, without allowing the federal authority to invade the autonomy of the several States beyond them."

It was natural that the new government should reflect, as faithfully as was practicable, the prevailing German monarchical system. In this system the Crown was not only an equal factor in legislation with the

legislature, consisting as a rule of two Houses, but *motu proprio* it exercised full executive power, through Ministers directly responsible to it, and to it alone. Following this analogy, the federal legislature was likewise to consist of two bodies, the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*), composed of plenipotentiaries of the Sovereigns, and a representative assembly or Diet. The President of the Confederation was alone empowered to summon, adjourn, and prorogue the Diet, but the assent of the Federal Council was necessary to its dissolution. Every member of the Council was to have a right to appear in and address the Diet at any time, without being under obligation to attend if called upon. In legislation the Federal Council and the Diet were to possess equal power, the President having as such no legislative functions; while the executive authority was to be exercised by the President and the Federal Council. The President was to represent the Confederation in foreign relationships, to appoint embassies, conclude treaties (except that treaties relating to matters subject to federal legislation needed the assent of the Federal Council and the Diet), and to administer the army and navy and the postal and telegraphic services; but in internal matters gener ally the executive power was vested in the Princes collectively as represented in the Federal Council.

The only Minister of State recognized by the constitution was the Federal Chancellor, who was to be nominated by the President, and was to be the *ex-officio* President of the Federal Council. It was his duty to countersign the orders of the President, and generally to direct the executive work of the Government. The concentration of so much power in the hands of a single Minister was not a mere whim of the Sovereigns and Governments, much less a device of Bismarck, designed to exaggerate his position and influence, but a result of the actual basis and conditions of federal organization. The Princes and States entered the Confederation as equals, none superior and none inferior to the rest. All accepted an equal restriction of their past independent sovereignty, and contributed this conceded right to the common stock, yet with the proviso that the new collective sovereignty, made up of so many parts, should be exercised by the collective will. With such exercise of authority the Cabinet system of Prussia or Bavaria, in which Ministers were for practical purposes autonomous in their various *ressorts*, was incompatible. In order that the Sovereigns might retain a real control over the central power

which they had created, it was held to be necessary to exercise this power through a single executive officer, and this officer was the Federal Chancellor. There were, indeed, to be Committees of the Federal Council, formed for certain specified purposes, but they in nowise corresponded to the Ministers of the States.

The constitution of the Federal Council disappointed the minor States, which had hoped to see in it, in effect, a replica of the *Bundestag*. By following the old federal basis the result was that Prussia would have 17 votes (being the number of her former votes in the Plenum of the dissolved Diet, increased by those of the annexed States) and the rest of the States 25 together, so that with but little assistance she would be able to command a majority. Of the old *liberum veto* not a trace remained.

The Diet was to be formed on the principle of one deputy to every 100,000 inhabitants, a ratio giving a total of 297 members, of whom 236 were to fall to Prussia. The mode of its election was to follow the Frankfort model, for it was to be chosen on a thoroughly democratic franchise – universal (i.e. manhood), equal, and direct. The acceptance by Bismarck of the principle of manhood suffrage has been the subject of endless controversy, and it is still sometimes regarded as one of the surprises of his career. There was really little mystery about his attitude. Of course, it went counter to every profession of his earlier years, but such a contradiction did not count with a man whose whole philosophy as a statesman was a protest against that shibboleth of the weaklings of political life, consistency. For him compromise was the only possible basis of constitutional life, and his concession of a democratic franchise merely attested the practical common sense of a wise man of affairs who was prepared to sacrifice his own preferences to the cause at stake. For he remembered that to have adopted any other principle of election would have been to ignore the entire trend of the national movement, every manifestation of which, in so far as it had emanated from the peoples as distinct from the Governments, had presupposed as the condition of unity a popular assembly elected by the nation's free and unfettered will. This was the argument by which he later justified his action to the constituent Diet. "We have in a certain sense," he said on March 28, 1867, "inherited universal suffrage as a legacy of the development of the German unity movement. We had it in the Imperial constitution as drafted in

Frankfort; in 1863 we opposed it to the endeavours of Austria, and for my part I can only say that I know no better electoral law."

Further, Bismarck knew that he was building not merely for the present but for the future. In due time the Southern States, with their more liberal traditions, would come into the Confederation. But a parliament elected on oligarchic principles, though it might have been good enough for Prussia, would have been entirely unacceptable to peoples who had outgrown and overthrown oligarchy in their own States. Above all – and this perhaps was the motive which most influenced him – it was his desire to detach sympathy from Austria by persuading the nation that it could obtain under Prussian leadership concessions in the direction of a fuller constitutional life which it could never hope to receive from a State which had for half a century strenuously fought every endeavour to extend popular rights, and had been almost the last of the German States to accept the constitutional principle.

On this question, therefore, as on most others, Bismarck was influenced solely by considerations of expediency. Just as, though never a "parliament man," he nevertheless regarded a parliament as unavoidable, so, though he distrusted the principle of the popular franchise, he yet knew that no other franchise was practicable. He created a Diet and gave to it a democratic form because convinced that such a Diet and no other would enable him to meet the tasks which remained still to be discharged. His was the position of the man who marries for the sake, not of companionship but of convenience and good cookery, though in the event he obtained neither. From the beginning he neither loved nor honoured the Diet, and in later years it refused not seldom to render him obedience.

The draft constitution having been approved by the Governments, it was submitted to a Diet of the States, elected on February 12, 1867, on a popular suffrage. In the speech with which he opened this assembly at Berlin twelve days later, the King of Prussia emphasized the evils caused to Germany by past divisions and claimed that the Governments of the federated States had sought to achieve the maximum benefits of union with a minimum degree of disturbance to existing political arrangements. He added: "The regulation of the national relations of the North German Confederation with our fellow-countrymen south of the Main has been left open by the treaty of

peace of last year (of Prague) as a matter for agreement. For the attainment of this mutual understanding our hand will be held out frankly and willingly to the countries of South Germany as soon as the North German Confederation shall have made sufficient progress in the establishment of its constitution to be in a position to conclude treaties."

As neither the Conservative nor the democratic groups had a majority, it fell to the National Liberals, a party of 79, who occupied a detached position, to hold the balance, and as they were ardent imperialists, they threw their influence in the Ministerial scale upon most important questions, and by so doing were able during the short life of the Diet to do work of great and lasting value. Dr. Simson, of Frankfort National Assembly fame, was elected President or Speaker, and one of the two Vice-Presidents was the National Liberal leader, Herr von Bennigsen.

The only business was the discussion and adoption of the draft constitution. The argumentative combats of the Frankfort Parliament hardly exceeded in vigour and vehemence the debates to which some of its articles gave rise. Again there came to light the old antagonism of political ideals which had been fought out upon so many fields since the beginning of the century by men whose intellectual outlook was too different to allow of reconciliation – at the one extreme the thoroughgoing democrats, at the other the feudalist Conservatives. The futility of the midsummer-night phantasies of 1848 had not discouraged the custodians of the popular cause, who strove for their principles with the old gallantry, and for their pains earned much opprobrium from opponents unable to enter into their world of ideas. They were still as stubborn and in many things as unpractical as ever, but the earnestness and honesty with which they contended for doctrines which to them represented everything worth caring for in public life were just as conspicuous as in the old Frankfort days.

To them the constitution was more than a set of regulations for the conduct of the new parliament; it was a declaration of faith which was to govern the nation's later political development, and they were determined that it should at least be worthy of its forerunner, the ill-fated constitution of 1849. Their ideal of unity through liberty had not been realized; now they dreamed of liberty through unity. Too old for illusions, they were still not too old for hopes, and their most ardent

hope was that the constitution might prove a means of winning for Germany in time true popular government. Hence they sought to keep out of it anything that might hinder progress later.

The draft fell far behind their expectations, and very far behind their wishes. One of the principles vital to them was the supremacy of the Diet. But the constitution as drawn up failed entirely to meet this demand, for it gave the entire executive power to the President and Federal Council, who were to be as independent of the representative chamber as were the Sovereign and Ministry under the constitution of Prussia. The Radicals or Progressists, forming the extreme Left, wished to give to the Sovereigns merely a deliberative voice in legislation, exercised through a sort of council of delegates, the executive power being vested in the King of Prussia as President, and the Diet assigning to him Ministers subject to its own control. Bitter was their disappointment when it became clear that the popular franchise, upon which so much praise had been expended, was an empty and illusory concession, since the Diet itself was to have no control over the Government and its policy.

It is true that the National Liberals succeeded in obtaining theoretical expression of the principle of Ministerial responsibility, but the Government soon made it clear that this responsibility was only moral and not legal; it simply implied that executive acts done by the head of the Government were by a legal fiction deemed to have been done by the Chancellor, who was to bear the brunt of public criticism. It did not mean that the Chancellor was to be subject, in any form whatever, to the control of the Diet, much less that he would be expected to stand or fall according as the Diet endorsed or disowned the measures for which he assumed official responsibility. To every attempt to create a collective Ministry, to convert the Committees of the Federal Council into independent administrative departments, or in any way to divide the power and responsibility of the Federal Chancellor and bring him under the Diet, Bismarck offered resolute resistance, and he carried the majority with him, though narrowly.

The democratic view was forcibly urged by men like Twesten and Waldeck, who had grown old in political warfare. Strong as was their attachment to the cause of national unity, they declared that even that unity would be dearly bought if the price to be paid were the abandonment of principles dear to them as life itself and the

frustration of all hope of seeing Germany take a place in the ranks of democratic States. To Waldeck the proposed Federal Council was so obnoxious – not least because it seemed to place his native Prussia at the mercy of the small States – that he was prepared at one time to reject the constitution bodily.

To Bismarck the democrats were well-meaning but utterly blind and mistaken *doctrinaires*, and his replies to their criticisms, though studiously conciliatory, were none the less uncompromising. Let them not, he entreated, imperil the new union by pressing abstract political principles too far; the Confederation could only be created by the adoption of a policy of give-and-take all round; the interests involved were so complex and far-reaching, that to increase difficulties needlessly would be to risk all they had been fighting for. Moreover, in political life nothing was final; this was a time of transition, and some of the arrangements proposed might properly be regarded as temporary and experimental; only let them not be put aside for others which, however perfect they might seem to be in theory, would not at present work in practice. “Let Germany only be lifted into the saddle,” he had said, “and she will ride of herself.” The homely simile carried greater conviction than all his arguments, and strengthened in their resistance to democratic innovations the static forces ever prone to tolerant contentment with outlived conditions.

Another question equally vital to the democrats was that of budget right. Here, again, the Frankfort demand of 1848-9 was urged – full parliamentary control over taxation and expenditure. With the recent constitutional struggle in mind, they wished to extend this control so as to bring military administration likewise under the effective power of the Diet. It was just the late conflict episode, however, that determined Bismarck not to parley with a party which sought to control the Executive and its policy in virtue of the power of the purse. Never, he said, would the federal Governments allow the fundamental basis of national security to depend on changing party majorities.

The constitutional provisions on this question were left in an unsatisfactory state. The broad principle was laid down that all estimates of revenue and expenditure must be duly embodied in a law, but inasmuch as the Federal Council was to have an equal voice in all legislation, that principle did not mean popular control. On the other

hand, the Diet carried its demand for yearly budgets instead of triennial, as the Government wished. In connection with finance the National Liberals succeeded in passing an innocent-looking amendment, of which the full importance was to be realized only many years later; this amendment empowered the Government to levy taxes in general instead of merely "indirect taxes," as the draft constitution had proposed.

On the subject of the army and navy, which were both to be subject to federal legislation, the Government was equally firm in repelling innovations. The draft constitution had proposed that for the present the Prussian military laws should apply throughout the entire federal territory, and that the permanent regulation of the army should be left to a future law, subject to the stipulation that no alterations should be introduced in military administration without the consent of the King of Prussia as the federal commander-in-chief. The effect of these provisions was to make military service compulsory on Prussian conditions and to give to that State a dominating influence in military administration.

There was something to be said for this arrangement, unpalatable though it was to non-Prussians. The old federal army of Germany had proved a deception and a failure. All that Austria cared about in Germany was that she should be supreme therein; to Germany's security against external enemies she was indifferent. With Austria's extrusion from Germany, however, the responsibility of national defence fell primarily upon Prussia, and this responsibility was not one to be taken lightly, for if Russia's friendship might fairly be counted on, that of France was quite uncertain.

Upon the principle of Prussian control, therefore, the Government would not hear of compromise. At Moltke's entreaty a majority of the House voted against a proposal to reduce the term of service with the colours from three to two years, but a concession had to be made upon the question of the peace strength of the army. The draft constitution proposed that for the first ten years the number should be equal to 1 per cent. of the population as enumerated in 1867, and the expenditure be fixed at 225 thalers or £33 15s. per man. In the course of long debates, in which men whose political reputations reached full maturity only in later years – Windthorst, Miquel, Gneist, and others – took a prominent part, the Radicals endeavoured to assert

parliamentary control of the army to the extent of requiring the peace strength and expenditure to be fixed annually. In the end a compromise was adopted under which there was to be parliamentary control of expenditure but not of revenue – taxation once sanctioned continuing in force – while the peace strength and the cost were to be fixed at the Government's figures for four years, viz. until December 31, 1871, but thereafter to be regulated by a permanent law, instead of being variable from year to year.

The question of the duration of the Diet likewise gave rise to much discussion. The draft constitution proposed three years, but the Conservative sections of the House wished for five years, and the shorter term was adopted only by a narrow majority.

One of the warmest disputes occurred over the question of payment of members. Bismarck was so entirely opposed to this principle that he had inserted in the draft constitution a direct prohibition of "either payment or remuneration." The disqualification was intended to counterbalance the universal suffrage: the vote was to be popularised but not, if it could be prevented, the composition of the Diet. In the end an amendment was passed, by a small majority, permitting such payment, though Bismarck declared that the Governments would in no circumstances give effect to it, and it had to be abandoned.

So, too, the democrats thought that no constitution could be complete without a long catalogue of "fundamental rights," and recalling the many weeks of controversy expended upon the subject in Frankfort in 1848, they proposed that this omission should be made good. But Berlin was not Frankfort and 1867 was not 1848, and the proposal was summarily rejected on the plea that every State had now its own charter of political liberties and that generalization on so difficult a question was inexpedient.

But if the constitution was too Conservative for the democrats, it was too democratic for the Conservatives. A belated attempt was made by the feudalists to create some sort of upper house – the idea appears to have originated with Duke Ernest of Coburg – to keep the Diet in order. Conservative though he was, Bismarck resisted the idea of a brake of the kind, objecting that any senate which interposed between the Federal Council, representing the sovereignty of the States, and the popular assembly would either need to possess too

much power or would be of no practical value. A proposal was made in the same quarter to extend the duration of the legislative period from three years, as it stood in the draft, to five years, but was defeated. Insidious attacks were also made upon the franchise, though with no greater success. To the Government's proposal that the franchise should be universal, direct, and equal, the majority parties had added secrecy, to the disgust of the Conservatives of all shades, who declared that the elector who dare not vote openly ought not to be allowed to vote at all. Attempts to introduce the householder franchise and the Prussian three-class indirect franchise – than which Bismarck said no State had ever conceived a "more senseless or more miserable" – were likewise frustrated. A proposal to disqualify State officials from sitting in the Diet met with greater favour, and although it was in the end rejected, the condition was introduced that such officials might not have leave of absence in order to become members.

Bismarck never regarded the constitution of the North German Confederation, even after the revision which became necessary four years later, as quite satisfactory. It was a compromise between antagonistic interests, intended to reduce conflict to a minimum – between Empire and sovereign State, princely rights and parliamentary rights, new claims and old traditions – and like the best of compromises it struck but the roughest balance of justice. As finally adopted on April 16th, however, the great majority of the deputies were well satisfied with their handiwork. Nevertheless, in the final as in the earlier stages of the debate, it was to the moderation, largeness of mind, and clearness of outlook shown by the National Liberals and other deputies who, though not of that part, shared its spirit and temper, that the enactment of the constitution in a reasonable and workable form was due. The Progressists, logical to the last, ended by voting against the measure for the only reason that it did not give them all they wanted.

Now the consent of the parliaments of all the federated States had to be obtained. This procedure was a further concession to the democratic principle which Bismarck made with reluctance, yet, in the existing state of national sentiment, did not dare to oppose. The voting was in general little more than a formality. Some of the Diets were sorely tempted to do the work over again, convinced that they could do it better, but everywhere the Governments discouraged

unnecessary interference, and in the end only one State – and that the smallest in the Confederation – refused to adopt the constitution. This was the principality of Waldeck. It was impossible, however, that the Confederation should be allowed to suffer shipwreck at the last moment, and the remedy for Waldeck's obstinacy was found by Prussia, which took over the entire administration of the little State. The constitution came into force on July 1st.

In the meantime acts of administrative folly had thrown a passing shadow over the domestic relations of the enlarged kingdom of Prussia. The two houses of the Diet had been prompt to accept the bill providing for the incorporation of the annexed territories. The populations of these territories also, on the whole, accepted their fate with better grace than might have been expected, and wise men would have left well alone. The constitution of Prussia was to come into operation on October 1, 1867, and until then the Government was given power to apply by rescript such special administrative measures as might be needed for the good government of the new provinces during a time of transition. Instead of reducing interference to a minimum, the Government brought home to the newcomers their new citizenship by the issue of all sorts of irritating orders and regulations superseding time-honoured institutions and customs. Unwarrantable changes were made in the judicial and financial systems of territories which had until lately been independent sovereign States; innovations – some progressive, others retrograde in spirit, but all subversive of established arrangements – were introduced in regard to delicate questions affecting personal liberty, like the right of migration and choice of occupation; and in many other ways the impression was created that a process of Prussianization was in store for the new provinces. The consequence was an outcry so vehement and widespread that the King himself intervened. In August, when visiting Ems for the first time as the ruler of Hesse-Nassau, the bruit of discontent reached his ears, and both there and also at Frankfort and Cassel, on his way home, he ascertained from deputations of local authorities where the hand of mischief had been at work. The result was the publication under his own name of a severe condemnation of the short-sighted conduct of his official representatives and a disavowal of their acts. The Minister of Finance, von der Heydt, offered in consequence to resign, but was

induced to remain. One result of the King's intervention was that Frankfort was relieved of part of the heavy indemnity which had been imposed upon it, and another and more important was an entire change in the temper of Prussia's new citizens. The election of the first North German Diet took place on August 31st, and the Diet met for practical work on September 10th. Bismarck had already been appointed Federal Chancellor and his Department duly constituted. This was the "Federal Chancellery Office," a board composed of councillors or heads of divisions subordinate in the first instance to a president, who, in turn, was directly responsible to the Chancellor himself. The first president was Rudolf Delbrück, a man of decidedly Liberal views.

It was significant of the political complexion of the first national parliament that the President (Dr. Simson) and Vice-Presidents were all men favoured by the Liberal or Liberal- Conservative parties. Throughout its early sessions, indeed, the Diet in general showed marked sympathy with progressive ideas. Never in German political history was so much done in so short a time for civil liberty. Hoary social abuses and time- honoured conventions were challenged with a freedom and light- heartedness which to the East Prussian Conservatives betokened coming catastrophe. As was the Diet, so was the Government. The feudalist-military party of Old Prussia, though good for pulling down, was useless for building up, and Bismarck ignored it, and accepted the willing help of the National Liberals, whose numbers had been increased by a contingent from the new Prussian provinces, and particularly Hanover. Thus it came about that a Minister whose past had been a consistent protest against Liberalism found himself, at the outset of his new career, dependent upon the co-operation of his old opponents.

The free spirit which reigned in the Diet at that time was shown in large as well as small things. Freedom of speech in Parliament was vigorously affirmed; obsolete restrictions were removed from marriage by the limitation of the arbitrary power of the mayors and the police; even the usurer was given more latitude by the abolition of the restrictions on the rate of interest, restrictions restored twenty-five years later. More important was the law giving the right of free migration, in virtue of which every subject of the Confederation was henceforth to be entitled to sojourn and settle, to acquire property,

and to carry on trade and industry in any part of the federal territory. In sympathy with this provision the passport regulations were lightened and the irksome interference of the police with travellers was curbed. Already the system of a local registration of inhabitants – a police and not a statutory measure – was common in Germany, and not being regarded as an infraction of the liberty of the subject, it was not altered by the Liberal legislation of the day.

The law of free migration was the first step taken towards the emancipation of labour, and other measures to the same end quickly followed. It was the day of Lassalle's denunciations of the "iron law of wages" and of his scheme of national productive associations. Moreover, Socialism was already represented in the Diet by men destined to become famous later – August Bebel, Wilhelm Liebknecht, and several others – though a Socialist parliamentary party did not yet exist. Except in the ranks of feudal Conservatism, there was on all hands a strong desire that labour should share generously in the first-fruits of unity. Hence a strong disposition was shown to abolish with one stroke all restrictions upon labour combinations, so giving to the working man the right to sell or withhold his labour with just the same freedom with which the capitalist offered or refused employment. When powerful industrialists, like Herr Stumm, a coal magnate of the day, protested against the excessive liberation of labour, they were heard with impatience. Called to state the Government's attitude, Delbrück declared that the time for restricting the right of coalition was past, though he was not prepared to legislate upon the question apart from a general revision of the existing Industrial Codes. So urgent was the Diet, however, that by a large majority it passed a law giving to labour a full right of combination. The Federal Council refused assent, but promised at once to consider the larger question of revising the general position of labour before the law. Months of strenuous work in committee, and long debates in the Diet, resulted in the great Industrial Code of 1869, which served as a foundation for the imposing body of labour legislation which was passed during the succeeding twenty years.

Something was also done to assimilate railway policy and to consolidate the railway system in the federal States. The Confederation took power to build and work railways for military purposes, but for the rest it left this branch of enterprise in the hands

of the States, reserving only a general right of control, with a view to unification of rates and charges and the like.

The question of Ministerial accountability came up again, but made no further advance. An undaunted band of Liberals introduced a scheme for the creation of separate federal Ministers for Foreign Affairs, War, the Navy, Finance, and Trade and Industry. Their plea, that the proposal was designed to lighten the duties of the Federal Chancellor, was received by Bismarck with the smiling assurance that his health was good and with due care might be expected so to continue. What was really desired was the subjection of the Government to parliamentary control, and he had thought that this question was already decided. The Diet adopted the proposal by a small majority, though warned in advance that the Federal Council would not endorse it.

During the discussion of the draft Penal Code, which was finally enacted in May, 1870, acute differences of opinion came to light on the subject of the death penalty. When the opponents of capital punishment failed to secure its omission from the code, they asked that it should at least not apply in Saxony and Oldenburg, which had already abolished it. Bismarck opposed this demand in the name of national unity, objecting that he could not agree to signalise the union of the Northern States by creating two classes of citizens – one consisting of several millions of people all too good for the executioner's axe and the other embracing the great multitude for whom that immunity could not be claimed. The death penalty, therefore, stood, though there was a large minority against it.

One of the early acts of the Diet was to make a grant and sanction a loan for the increase of the navy. A shipbuilding programme was prepared, to be spread over ten years, in which time it was hoped that the Confederation would have at command a navy sufficient for coast defence. In 1868 the naval estimates stood at about half a million pounds, an amount increased in the following year to two millions, out of a total budget of eleven and a half million pounds. Unpractical Radicals, grudging such expenditure as unproductive, contended that the most economical way to increase Germany's naval and maritime strength was not to build ships to order, but to invite Denmark and Holland to come into the Confederation.

More delicate, if not more difficult, was the second of the two

problems which Bismarck had to face at the close of the war, the relations between the North and the South. Here unfailing sagacity and tact, combined with great patience, were needed. The North German Confederation was a provisional union, and everybody knew it to be such; the Main frontier was merely a stage on the way to the South, a halting-place at which to take breath before pushing forward again. In the terms of peace offered to Austria's German allies, no less than in his negotiations with the major Power itself, Bismarck had steadily kept the future in view. The States absorbed by Prussia were no longer a source of danger; from those hostile States which remained independent no cession of territory had been demanded, save in two cases a trivial rectification of frontiers, and the money indemnities imposed were light and entailed no lasting drain upon their resources. Bad blood enough was left, and there had been bad blood between Prussia and her Southern neighbours before: it was only a question of degree.

In remaining out of the Confederation the States of the South, with one exception, certainly did not experience the sensation of the peris who were locked out of Paradise. They were excluded by their own wish, and Bismarck never showed wiser statesmanship than in his steady refusal to press upon them the union which the States of the North had been required to enter. In their eagerness to make entrance easy for them the democrats of the North German Diet had wished to allow them to join by simply declaring their acceptance of the federal constitution. Even in this suggestion Bismarck declined to concur, and it was made a stipulation of the new constitution that admission, if desired, should be on the proposal of the President of the Confederation and in virtue of legislation. Urged from within, invited from without, always his answer was the same: it was not for the Confederation to force itself upon the South; when the South wished to enter, it had only to say so and the door would be opened. "It is open to the Southern States to join hands with the North," he said in September, 1867, "and when they wish it no German statesman will be strong enough to prevent it, or will even desire to see them excluded, but they cannot be compelled." For the present it was his conviction that it was wiser to unify half Germany thoroughly than all Germany incompletely. Meanwhile, he had done the essential thing: by means of the defensive and offensive alliances of August, 1866, he

had made sure that the Southern States should not form alliances out of Germany. By one bold stroke, therefore, he had cut off Bavaria and Würtemberg, Baden and Hesse, from their Austrian ally and equally from any French influence that could be dangerous. Nor did he doubt that if either North or South were ever in peril through menace from the West, they would at once forget past discords and fight together for the common fatherland. “In the event of attack,” he said in the constituent Diet on March 11, 1867, “I regard the union of the North and South as absolutely assured in all questions affecting the security of German soil. No doubt can exist in the South that if its integrity should be endangered North Germany would unconditionally render it fraternal help, and equally no one doubts in the North that we should be assured of the help of the South in any attack upon us.”

By the military treaties the contracting parties had mutually guaranteed the integrity of their several territories, and pledged themselves in the event of war to place their entire forces at each other’s disposal under the supreme command of the King of Prussia. That meant that Prussia would be able in an emergency to dispose of a force of 800,000 men, a number which would be increased to over a million as soon as the Prussian army laws had come into full operation. The terms of these treaties were published in March, 1867, and created painful surprise both in Vienna and Paris, where they were regarded, with no justification, as a formal breach of the provisions of the Treaty of Prague. Particularism died last and died hardest in Bavaria and Würtemberg, where the tribal spirit and the attachment to local traditions and institutions were extremely strong and where, in truth, there was much that was well worth being particularist about. In the South, too, lingered still a strong desire for the continuance of close relationships with Austria. From this desire sprang a proposal made by Bavaria and Würtemberg in May, 1867, that the States of the South should severally form with the North German Confederation a new union, which in turn should enter into a formal alliance with the Habsburg Empire. The Bavarian Minister-President, now Prince Hohenlohe, who had succeeded von der Pfordten at the end of December, 1866, put the idea before Beust, the Austrian Chancellor, who answered that such a proposal could only come from Prussia, and would not further commit himself. Hohenlohe accordingly sounded Bismarck, who welcomed the idea and in the

name of Prussia and Bavaria offered Austria an alliance which should guarantee the integrity of her territories. Beust declined the offer, however, not only because it was too early to talk of conciliation with the victors of Sadowa, but because he believed that such an alliance would create a too intimate tie between Prussia and the South, and hence would destroy all hope of Austria ever being able to reassert influence there. He was convinced, too, that such an alliance would be a menace to European peace, by exciting still further the jealousy of France, perhaps to Austria's hurt more than to that of Prussia. In private, Beust spoke of the offer more drastically. Inasmuch as it could have been aimed only at France, he said, it was dishonouring to Austria. "It is scarcely ten months," he said to the Bavarian ambassador, Count Tauffkirchen, "since Napoleon saved Vienna and the integrity of Austrian territory, and yet we are invited to enter into an alliance against France! Never will the Emperor Francis Joseph be induced to commit such an enormity; he will not understand how such a suggestion could even have been made to him."

Beust at that time was brooding over another and a more ambitious plan. This contemplated a formal alliance with France, a cordial understanding with Russia, and as the result the effectual isolation of Prussia. Napoleon might have been quite prepared to welcome an arrangement of the kind, had it been practicable, for Prussia had just administered to him a rebuff which showed that he was no longer accepted at the old estimate. This arose out of the non-observance of the provision of the Treaty of Prague guaranteeing to the population of the northern frontier districts of Schleswig the right to "declare by *plébiscite* under which rule it wished to live, Danish or Prussian. As there was no disposition in Berlin to give effect to this provision, the Danish Government appealed to France to interfere, and France did so. It was Napoleon's first attempt to exert pressure upon the policy of reconstituted Prussia, and Bismarck determined that it should be the last. Not only was the French ambassador in Berlin informed that no right on the part of France to interfere in a matter between Prussia and Denmark could be admitted, but an inspired announcement was published in the semi-official Press calling public attention to this exchange of communications and declaring that the Government would tolerate no outside meddling in German affairs. The incident increased the hostile feeling against Prussia which was

already prevalent in France.

Later in the same year Napoleon gave an unmistakable proof of his desire for closer relations with Austria when, in company with the Empress Eugénie, he visited Francis Joseph at Salzburg (August 18th-23rd). The political significance of the journey to Austria was increased by the fact that he was cordially greeted at Karlsruhe by the Grand Duke of Baden and at Ulm by the King of Würtemberg, and that from Augsburg onward to the Austrian frontier he was accompanied by King Ludwig of Bavaria. Nominally the Emperor went to Salzburg in order to offer condolences to the Imperial family on account of the murder in June of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico (an Austrian Archduke) by rebels. In reality the meeting was of a political character. Count Beust and Count Andrassy, the Hungarian Minister-President, were present, and there were repeated conferences. According to the former, an agreement was concluded to the effect that the two Powers should faithfully observe the stipulations of the Peace of Prague but avoid any interference in German affairs, though Austria was to endeavour to preserve the sympathies of South Germany "by developing a Liberal and truly constitutional system." Nevertheless, the negotiations stopped short of a formal alliance. Napoleon returned direct to Paris without meeting the King of Prussia. On the other hand, when in October Francis Joseph returned Napoleon's visit in Paris he alighted at Oos, near Baden-Baden, where, according to Beust, he had a "hurried and constrained" interview with the King.

While in Germany it was generally recognized that the unity movement could not long stand still, opinions differed widely upon the question how far it was competent for the States of the South to conclude separate treaties with Prussia. It was objected by some that the Treaty of Prague contemplated first some sort of combination amongst these States themselves, and that only after that had been created would union with the North be practicable. The obvious answer to this objection was that there was nothing in the treaty that in the least bound the Southern States to anything at all, since they were not parties to it. All it did was to record in advance Austria's agreement to any separate union into which the States might choose to enter, and inferentially – since such a union was to have "an international and independent existence" – to whatever ties it might

wish to establish with the Confederation of the North.

While, therefore, Bavaria contended that the States should either join the North German Confederation together or not at all, Bismarck held that they were perfectly free to do as they liked, yet that it was inexpedient that any of them should be admitted separately. He was particularly determined that Baden should not be allowed to enter first and alone as it wished, for he regarded that State as a far more valuable asset of the unity movement outside than inside the Confederation. For him the chief significance of this provision of the treaty was that it amounted to a warning of "Hands off!" to Austria in all that concerned the future internal development of Germany.

The question was advanced an important stage by the revision of the customs arrangements which the new situation had made necessary, for in withdrawing from the Bund Austria withdrew from all the federal arrangements existing under it. At the end of December, 1866, the Prussian Government had given the requisite notice to terminate the Customs Union, and in the following June the Ministers of the South German States, at its invitation, met at Berlin to consider its future form. There was no great difficulty in agreeing upon a renewal of the treaties, though Bavaria made assent conditional upon the grant to her of certain privileges. More important was the question how the affairs of the union were to be administered in the altered conditions. Bismarck proposed that legislative power in customs questions should be exercised by the new Federal Council and Diet, both enlarged for the purpose by the proportional representation therein of the States of the South, and the latter sitting as a "Customs Parliament." In the past the States of the Germanic Federation had been accustomed to arrange customs questions by means of "Customs Conferences," but at all times with difficulty, owing to the operation of the *liberum veto*, which made it possible for any one of the States to thwart the interests and wishes of all the rest. This veto was to go, and in both legislative assemblies every resolution was to be decided by a simple majority of votes. This plan was approved, and the customs treaty of July 8, 1867, was adopted on this basis, with the stipulation that it was to last eight years, from January 1, 1868, to January 1, 1876.

Nevertheless, the treaty did not pass through the South German Diets without severe struggles, fought on the old battle-cries of

particularism and anti-Prussianism. The controversies were all the keener since the military alliances came up for confirmation at the same time. Once more the whole question of German unity seemed to be reopened. The first of the States to confirm the treaty was Baden, where there was a strong sentiment favourable to complete and immediate union with the North. The Grand Duke was enthusiastic in his advocacy of such a union, and he lost no opportunity of urging the Diet to embrace any opportunity of furthering it. As the Customs Union seemed a substantial help on the way, the chambers approved both it and the military alliance with virtual unanimity. Grand-ducal Hesse likewise promptly accepted both treaties.

It was different in Würtemberg, where bitter anti-Prussian sentiments still prevailed. In the Lower Chamber the Radicals and Protectionists united against the Government – the former mainly because of the proposed alliance, the latter because of the new customs arrangements. The deputy Moritz Mohl crystallized the current feeling in a fiery "Warning" ("*Mahnruf*") against the danger of allowing Wurtemberg to come under the domination of Prussia. In this manifesto he pictured Swabia as a land richly endowed by nature and favoured by history, its people as the special emissaries of German culture, to whose service it had given Schiller, Uhland, Wieland, and Auerbach, and its State as the embodiment of the spirit of freedom and independence. On the other hand, he represented Prussia as poor by nature, its population divided into two antagonistic classes of arrogant Junkers and downtrodden serfs; he held up the Prussian State to obloquy as the "product of restless conquest, of blood and iron," under which lived a nation "tormented by the oppressive burden of militarism and taxation"; while of the Government he said that it was "omnipotent towards the legislature, despotic towards its federal allies, and disquieting towards all its neighbours." Prussia alone he declared to be responsible for the dissolution of the old Federation, under which Germany had for half a century enjoyed the blessings of peace, and for the bloody civil war which had torn the nation into fragments. Never should Würtemberg, he added, ally herself to such a State: "It cannot protect us: it would shed the blood of our sons for its own purposes." He therefore called upon the nation and the Diet to dissociate themselves both from the military alliance with Prussia and from the Customs Union.

Mohl's manifesto was circulated in tens of thousands throughout the length and breadth of the land, and it powerfully excited political passions. A strong movement of protest was begun, and a national congress of the democratic party, held on September 29th, called for the rejection of the treaties and the dismissal of the Minister (Varnbüler) who had negotiated them. Varnbüler in his defence replied in effect that the treaties were the outcome of facts against which it would be folly to fight. "In the year 1866," he said (October 29th), "there were still two opinions in Germany as to how the German question should be solved. History has decided, and it is useless to ask any longer whether it would have been more desirable this way or that. Austria has been sentenced to leave Germany, and whoever continues to speculate as though this should not have happened is a dreamer." Nevertheless, his words failed to convince, and for a time the treaties had to be put back. Rather than run the risk of losing the Customs Union, however, the Diet in the end approved the action of the Government.

In Bavaria also opinion was divided, and the opposition was strengthened owing to the fact that the Government was in conflict with the Ultramontanes on matters of internal policy. The Lower House of the Diet accepted both the customs treaty and the electoral law for the Customs Parliament – the military alliance did not require legislative sanction – by an overwhelming majority, but the Upper House wished to make its assent conditional upon the reservation to Bavaria of her former special rights as a member of the Customs Union. Such a claim was now out of date, and when the North German Diet had sanctioned the customs treaty, subject to the ratification of all the military alliances, and Bismarck had notified the Bavarian Government that it must choose between accepting the treaty as it stood or being left out of the new Customs Union, here, too, the opposition melted away.

Bismarck was unyielding in the demand that both treaties must be accepted or rejected together, and warned the South German States that if any of them disowned the military alliance he would terminate the Customs Union at once so far as they were concerned. In face of this threat the refractory Diets acquiesced.

To Napoleon the renewal of the Customs Union was a shock; he was surprised that it had been possible to conclude it at all, and

doubly surprised that it had been concluded with so little difficulty. His surprise changed into disgust when a little later Baden made formal overtures for admission to the North German Confederation.

The Customs Parliament met for the first time on April 27, 1868. The elections were on the whole very discouraging to the friends of a larger union. Baden, as had been expected, sent a strong contingent of imperialists, but the overwhelming representation of Bavaria and Würtemberg was hostile to any further overtures to the North and particularly hostile to Prussia. Bismarck had expected great things from this meeting of the German States on the common ground of economic interest – it was the mounting-block from which, in his metaphor, Germany was to spring into the saddle – and his greeting to the South German deputies was very cordial. "Here," he said, "you will find brotherly hearts and hands ready to help in every predicament of life." Dr. Simson, in whose blood seemed to run a passion for Presidencies, was once more put in the chair, as before without a division, but acute difference of opinion arose when the two vice-presidents came to be chosen. As a proof of fraternal feeling, the North Germans were willing that these positions should be filled by South Germans, and they accordingly proposed Prince Hohenlohe, the Bavarian Minister-President, as first deputy and Baron von Roggenbach, the late Baden Minister-President, as second. Both men were obnoxious to the Clericals, however, Hohenlohe as an uncompromising enemy of Ultramontanism (though a Roman Catholic himself), and Roggenbach as an enthusiastic advocate of complete national union. Hohenlohe was, nevertheless, elected, but by agreement with the Conservatives the Clericals succeeded in substituting the Duke of Ujest for Roggenbach. A small body of South German (Baden and Darmstadt) National Liberals, supported by their North German colleagues, wished so to colour the address to the King of Prussia in answer to the speech from the throne, as to make it a manifesto on behalf of a fuller national unity. It was soon seen, however, that any such attempt thus to force the pace was premature and could only defeat its own object.

The sentiment still dominant in the South was faithfully reflected by Herr von Thüngen, one of the Bavarian deputies, who declared that while the South was prepared to adhere faithfully to the military treaties, it was not prepared at present to do more. He added: "I will

be frank and truthful; I cannot disguise the fact that a majority of South Germans, the mass of the people, are opposed to a closer connection with Prussia. There prevails there a certain distrust, a certain fear, that through a too close association our independence might be prejudiced. If you regard this feeling as unjustifiable, you will at least understand it when you remember that the South German tribes have ever cultivated a great attachment to their institutions and ruling houses, and when you also reflect that with us the great mass of the people are influenced by sentimental feelings and that antipathy begins when their feelings are wounded, as they have been by the Prussian victories." And yet it was a Bavarian deputy, the stalwart democrat Joseph Völk, who in the elation caused by the meeting of the first Customs Parliament uttered the memorable words, "It is spring-time in Germany!" On a division, a combination of Clericals, Conservatives, and democrats defeated the generous design of the imperialists. Not only the unconverted particularists of the South, however, but many warm friends of unity in the North, believed that the best policy was one of vigilant waiting, and that for the present the maxim *solvitur laborando* offered the surest promise of success.

Bismarck accepted the situation as it was, without illusions and without impatience. To General Suckow, the chief of the Würtemberg General Staff, he said at that time (May 11th): "The elections to the Customs Parliament have shown that for the present the South wants to have no further connection with the North save in the form of the Customs Union and the Treaty of Alliance. The North has no reason to require more, for from the strategical standpoint the connection with the South is not for us a source of strength, and politically we have no desire to be merged in the heterogeneous elements of the South, where no one knows whether the particularists or the democrats are Prussia's worse enemies. We are all attached to the national idea, but the calculating politician aims first at what is essential and only later at what is desirable: the house must be first built before there can be talk of enlargements. When the deputies have sat together for a year or two in the Customs Parliament, conciliation will begin, and the South Germans will see that there can be no question of coercion. We are in full sympathy with our South German brothers, to whom we are ready at all times to give our hand, but we neither wish nor have we the right to compel them to take it."

One of the most important acts of the first Customs Parliament was the conclusion of a new treaty of commerce with Austria in place of the treaty of 1865, which had been annulled by the war. The idea of her admission to the German Customs Union was no longer regarded as practicable, but she had still in the States of the South many friends who wished to draw as closely as possible the economic ties between her and the rest of Germany. Prussia, too, recognized the wisdom of a policy of conciliation, and thus it came about that a new treaty favourable to the ejected member of the Federation was adopted on May 11th by an overwhelming vote – 246 against only 17. Similar treaties with other States followed.

In closing the Parliament on May 23rd the King of Prussia, as President, reversed the doctrine that "Might is right" in memorable words. "Not the power which God has placed in my hands," he said, "but the rights over which I dispose with my federal allies and the constitutional assemblies of their subjects, in virtue of voluntary treaties, shall now and in the future serve as the rule of my policy."

In spite of their differences, the members of the Customs Parliament gave to the national movement invaluable help. Their very controversies in the end tended to create a greater identity of interest, as more emphasis came to be laid upon the things common to North and South and less upon those that divided them. It is also noteworthy that the spirit of the new customs legislation was from the first favourable to freer trade. Each session duties were reduced or abolished; in particular, two important principles, which were destined to be embodied in the early policy of the Empire, were established – taxation for the purposes of revenue only and the exemption from fiscal burdens of the food and indispensable needs of the people.

Outside Germany the progress of the unity movement was still received with mingled feelings, of which the strongest and most prevalent was a vague mistrust of the final outcome. Officially only one European Power of the first rank can be said to have been cordially disposed towards Prussia and the German movement at that time, and that Power was Russia. However conscious they may have been of the value of a good understanding with Prussia and the new German Confederation in which she was now merged, the attitude of the other leading countries, as represented by their Governments, was

either indifferent, suspicious, or hostile. None of them welcomed the appearance of this new political force, menacing to the old balance of power and, as they feared, to the future harmony of Europe. So long as the Bund lasted Austria and Prussia held each other in check, and the rest of the Powers were well satisfied with an arrangement so convenient. Now Austria had for the present fallen into the background, and there had come into prominence a restless and ambitious State, bent on creating a new empire of the Germanic peoples and dominating it. All the instincts of conservatism were opposed to the interloper who had thus broken in upon the scene so abruptly, bringing with him tumults and wars.

At the same time there were still many friends of Austria, in France more than elsewhere, who honestly believed that Prussia's suddenly gained prestige was unreal and would not stand the test of time. They were therefore disposed to rate cheaply her claim to hegemony in Germany, and to assume that as soon as the elation caused by her recent military success had been exhausted she would fall back into a subordinate place in the European concert as sanctioned by the older States, and that the life of Europe would then continue as before. Such men were little concerned to take the new turn of events tragically, or to modify their habitual order of ideas in Prussia's favour.

Not a little of the statesmanship of Europe was bankrupt in ideas, foresight, and courage in the middle of the nineteenth century, when mighty political changes were pending and a great Empire and nation were in the throes of painful birth. "The extraordinary success of the Prussians," Lord Malmesbury wrote after the Bohemian war, "has alarmed all nations." The alarm, if exaggerated, was real in some quarters, but more real and more general was the feeling of disdainful resentment that an upstart Power should have suddenly dared to aspire to eminence without patronage or permission. Prussia had begun to annoy and vex Europe, as Europe had annoyed and vexed the first Napoleon.

No truer appreciation of the events in which Prussia was taking so prominent a part was shown in England than elsewhere, though ties of the most intimate kind had existed between the two countries since the marriage of the Prussian Crown Prince to the Princess Royal in January, 1858. A great political and national transformation, for

which the struggles of two generations had been a constant preparation, was nearing fulfilment, yet not a few of the watchmen upon the observation towers at home and abroad failed altogether to understand its significance. There were leaders of British opinion at that time who knew nothing of Germany, nothing of German history, and who hardly dreamed that a German question existed. Historians and men of letters like Carlyle, Stubbs, Freeman, and Kingsley anticipated the coming regeneration of Germany and welcomed it sympathetically from afar, but what is called public opinion is made, not by historians and men of letters, but by politicians – not by the men who write, but by those who talk; and such public opinion upon German politics as existed at all owed its inspiration to these. Almost altogether the sympathies of official England at that time were on the side of Austria, the oppressor of Italy and the one obstruction to Italian unity, a cause to which Germany, like France and England, was yet warmly attached.

The despatches and reflections of German diplomats of the period bear curious testimony to the difficulty which attended their endeavours to interest British statesmen in German affairs, or even to make the unity question intelligible and real to the British mind. Baron Bunsen, the Prussian envoy in London, wrote in July, 1849: “To speak with the English on foreign politics is only worth while on the Roman question. . . . On the subject of Germany the Tories are inimical, the Whigs apathetic, the Radicals alone reasonable.” And again (just before the Crimean War): “It is quite entertaining to see the stiff unbelief of the English in the future of Germany. Lord John is merely uninformed. Peel has somewhat staggered the mind of the excellent Prince by his unbelief; yet he has a statesmanlike good-will towards the Germanic nations and even for the German nation. Aberdeen is the greatest sinner. He believes in God and in the Emperor Nicholas.” “One must forget his Continental ideas,” said in 1854 Count Colloredo, the Austrian ambassador, “in reading the English daily Press.” Recalling his experiences as Saxon envoy in 1854, Count Vitzthum says: “People in England at that time knew nothing at all of what was taking place on the Continent. Only the obscurest ideas of the rivalry of the two German Powers prevailed, and yet therein lay the key to the enigmas of Prussian policy.”

Another Prussian envoy, who was already becoming famous,

visited London from Paris in June, 1862, and carried away the same impressions. “It was very pleasant there,” Bismarck wrote to his wife just afterwards, “but the Ministers know less about Prussia than about Japan and Mongolia, nor are they any cleverer than our own.”

It may be said that such opinions – and they might be multiplied – come from sources which are prejudiced in turn; yet they fairly represent the dominant feeling in English political circles at that time. The Press, too, or at least the more influential metropolitan journals, accurately voiced the prevalent antipathy against Germany, and more particularly Prussia. And this antipathy, it must be remembered, existed before Bismarck became the Prussian Minister-President and gave to Prussian policy a moral twist which created against his country a new and more intelligible bias, that thereafter never entirely disappeared.

No one was more painfully conscious of the attitude of mingled disparagement and unconcern held in Great Britain towards Germany and everything German, of the harm which it was doing, and the greater harm which it was certain to do in the future, than the Prince Consort, who included in his censures Ministers and diplomats alike, the former because they did not want to understand, the latter because they would not go to the trouble to discover the facts, though to do so was their one and only duty. Commending a report sent by a consul in South Germany who had gone out of his way to study the German question as it affected the Southern States, the Prince wrote on March 18, 1860: “He evidently takes the means to inform himself, which our diplomatists despise.” Bunsen, in the words already quoted, distributed the blame fairly between the rival parties. Because the Whigs were in power it was apathy that determined the dominant attitude. There were, of course, bright exceptions, both amongst the Whigs and Tories, but the exceptions only made the rule more positive. Stockmar, for example, spoke of Peel in 1850 as having “a good-will, nay, a predilection, for Germany and especially for Prussia,” and Bunsen in 1849, with unnecessary exaggeration, described that discreetest of ambassadors, Lord Cowley, as being “as German as myself.” So, too, Vitzthum wrote of Disraeli in 1860 that he “in no way shared the indisposition of his countrymen to discuss what are here (in London) known as ‘German politics.’” Vitzthum himself was Disraeli’s special mentor upon this abstruse subject, yet

the slow progress made by his pupil may be judged by the remark of Disraeli's three years later (November, 1863): " Prussia without nationality, the principle of the day, is clearly the subject for partition."

Lord John Russell represented the fine flower of British statecraft in the middle of the century, and no man had a more open mind, yet on his own admission it was only after the shock which Napoleon's rape of Savoy gave to him in 1860 – that is, forty-eight years after he entered parliamentary life, twenty-five years after he became a Minister, and fourteen years after he had formed his first Cabinet – that he awoke to the importance of having a policy in regard to Germany. He approached the Prince Consort (March 15, 1860) with a request for "some clue" as to what that policy should be, adding with characteristic candour: "I have hitherto been very unwilling to enter at all into the intimate politics of the German Confederation." In his reply (March 18th) the Prince roughly sketched the main outlines of the German question, but warned that most eloquent of despatch-writers – not perhaps without malice – "Foreign Powers, and England in particular, can do very little good by advice. We ought, therefore, in my opinion, to confine ourselves to inculcating confidence in Prussia at the minor Courts, showing that from her alone can be expected sufficient support and protection, and that the efficiency of that support will be in proportion to their adhesion to her. Of this our diplomatic agents do ever diametrically and systematically the reverse." Nevertheless, perhaps of contemporary British statesmen it was Russell who most succeeded in preserving upon this question a clear political outlook in the midst of the prevailing ignorance and prejudice. He not only came to favour German unity, but even to regard the question as one for the Germans alone. Here he differed both from Lord Palmerston and Lord Clarendon. Palmerston had followed the course of events in Germany longer and with a more eager interest, though only up to a certain point, and when he ceased to keep abreast with the march of events his persistent inability to accommodate himself to changing circumstances led him into errors of judgment from which his reputation eventually suffered. As early as 1842 Lord Melbourne complained to Greville of the "aversion" which Palmerston "had inspired not only in France but in all Germany, and said that his notion was that everything was to be done by violence,

that by never giving way or making any concession, and an obstinate insistence, every point was sure to be gained."

Equally with Lord John, Palmerston wished to see a strong Germany, as a counterpoise to France and Russia: he knew that a strong Germany would be impossible without a strong Prussia; and for that reason he was willing at a later date to forgive Prussia the seizure of Schleswig-Holstein which otherwise he held to be an altogether reprehensible proceeding. It was Palmerston's habit, however, to have a finger in every European pie; hence he looked for a German unity regulated by the other Powers and was not prepared to allow Germany to transform herself in her own way. Lord Clarendon likewise claimed that before the Germanic Federation could be dissolved the Powers which had helped in the reconstruction of the Continent at the beginning of the century should be consulted as to "the arrangements destined to replace it." Almost generally British Ministers, statesmen, and ambassadors assumed as a matter of course that the German house might not be put in order without outside sanction and guidance. The ambassador in Berlin even gravely warned the Prussian Government in 1862 that the pacification of Hesse was a European question, which it would be wise to let alone. At this distance of time such views seem inexcusably foolish and arrogant, but it occurred to few people to reflect that they were either foolish or arrogant then. It is doubtful whether among all the officed statesmen and diplomats of that period there was one man who in knowledge of the true motive forces of European politics, and of German politics in particular, and in perception of the trend of the national movements which were then in progress, equalled the plain-speaking but incomparably shrewd Lancashire cotton-spinner, Richard Cobden.

So it continued even after Sadowa had placed beyond dispute Prussia's right to be regarded not only as a Great Power but as one of the greatest. As late as 1868 Count Bernstorff, the enlightened representative first of Prussia and later of the North German Confederation and the succeeding Empire at the Court of London (from 1853 to 1861 and from 1862 to 1873), had to complain to Bismarck that "the greater part of modern statesmen in England know incredibly little about Germany." The claim to keep Germany for ever in leading- strings had now been abandoned, because it could no longer be substantiated. Yet Clarendon, who by frequent travel made

honest efforts to discover for himself at first hand the capital facts of foreign politics, long continued to regard the completion of the work of unity begun in 1866 as merely designed to gratify Prussia's ambition and to place at her King's command an unnecessarily large army. There were still British statesmen, even Foreign Secretaries, who had never troubled even to master the rank of the Prussian Minister who was making Germany and remaking Europe, and two wars were necessary before the British Foreign Office learned to spell Bismarck's name correctly. Foibles of the kind were not comical but tragical, since they were symptomatic of a want of appreciation of the large questions behind. Let there be no misunderstanding: in its dealings with Germany and Prussia at that time England's statecraft was perfectly upright, straightforward, and sincere, from the standpoint of honourable dealing free from any reproach; its faults were culpable ignorance and blindness, and a lack of any appreciation of realities, yet these faults were fatal.

A fatuous notion – not yet exploded – that knowledge of affairs, and especially foreign affairs, comes by intuition, an insuperable prejudice against everything alien to their world of ideas, and a blunt refusal to respond to outside influences led many British statesmen and politicians astray at that great and critical time, with the consequence that the British nation in turn played a short-sighted and ill-considered part. The national movement was not more legitimate or more laudable in Italy than in Germany, yet England's sympathies, freely and generously given in the one case, were to a large extent withheld in the other. It is true that the German struggle for unity lacked the epic moments which appealed to the imagination of a people whose very cradle-song had been a song of liberty, that in it there had hitherto been little that was heroic and much that was weak and ignoble, that the German nation had made few courageous attempts to assert itself, but after every failure to dethrone the reactionary powers which kept it back it had again kissed the rod with servile abasement. Perhaps to that extent it might fairly be said that Germany was herself to blame for the indifference which was felt towards her. No doubt, too, the strong German influences at Court which caused so much resentment in the early Victorian period created prejudices against everything German.

Yet even if it was not necessary, or to be expected, that those

whom Germany failed to attract should accord to the national cause sympathy and welcome, it would at least have been common sense to give to it an intelligent understanding and to view it in relation to the entire European situation. But that was not done. Sir Robert Morier did not love Germany and he disliked Bismarck with every reason, yet he understood both as few of his contemporaries did, and he recognized that "the victory of Prussia, ending with the expulsion of Austria out of Germany, would be the greatest boon that could be given to Europe and Austria." The refusal of his countrymen, and above all their political leaders, to make up their minds that German unity was at the door, and to con form their attitude to it, was to Morier a source of poignant mortification and dark foreboding.

The Prince Consort complained to Lord Granville on one occasion that the "principal deficiency" of English statesmen was that they "never looked at any subject as part of the whole." The German question was not merely part, but a large part, of European and of world politics, yet how many Englishmen, in high or lowlier place, conceived it as such? More or less the same spirit of indifference, now cold, now contemptuous, continued to govern British policy towards the new Power for twenty years, until resolute refusal to recognize facts on one side and equally resolute refusal to have them ignored on the other brought the two countries into a grave conflict over the question of colonial expansion.

THE HOHENZOLLERN CANDIDATURE, 1867-1870

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MODERN HISTORY AFFORDS NO parallel to the suddenness and completeness of Austria's eclipse after Sadowa and the Treaty of Prague. The Power which had so long dominated Germany, and had spoken for her in the councils of Europe, fell at once into the background. It was not that the war left Austria intrinsically weaker than before, save for the moment, but rather that it had exposed a weakness which already existed, yet had been but little suspected by the outside world, and by Austria herself not at all. Every nation has its mission to perform, the vigorous and the decadent alike: the mission of the former is to go forward, that of the latter to make way for others, and allow them to do the work for which it is unfitted. Austria seemed to have reached the stage of decline in which renunciation and self-effacement are a nation's last remaining virtues. The weight of empire had imposed upon her military strength, statesmanship, and material resources a drain which all were incapable of meeting, and because she had been living upon a past reputation she failed to recognize their insufficiency until it was too late to avert disaster.

Henceforth Austria was thrown back upon herself, and more than ever her politics became circumscribed by Habsburg interests. Driven out of Germany, and now retaining only a narrow foothold in Italy, it was in the East that she was in future to seek the assertion of her influence.

Yet Austria's disappearance from the stage upon which she had so long played the foremost part in the drama of German unity meant only a certain rearrangement of the cast, for the drama itself was to continue a little longer. Now an actor who until lately had been little more than an understudy took the leading place, and the late prompter of the piece aspired to an active *rôle*.

The relations between Prussia and France were peculiar. Down to the disaster of Sadowa, Napoleon had claimed to occupy the position of an arbiter between the contentious Great Powers of Germany, both of which had in turn been suitors for his good-will and disposed to make large concessions in order to gain it. He indulged in no hollow boast when he claimed that he was the true author of the peace preliminaries of Nikolsburg and hence of the Treaty of Prague, and that he had thus set the limits to Prussia's recent aggrandizement. The war, however, had created a new situation; there was no longer need

for an intermediary between Powers of which one had so lately been at the mercy of the other; and both France and Prussia had accordingly to adjust their relationships to an entirely different set of conditions and eventualities.

Of the two, Prussia, in her still uncertain position in Europe, had on the whole the greater cause to seek friendships. In a speech made in the Prussian Lower House on September 1, 1866, Bismarck had said: “The tasks of our foreign policy have not yet been completed. The successes of the army have only increased our stakes; we have more to lose than before, but we have gained nothing at all.” Situated as she was, it would have been folly to have sought difficulties, least of all with a neighbour so well able, as it seemed, to reward either good or evil as France. Bismarck, therefore, continued for the present to preserve towards the Emperor the old attitude of deference. Both sides were conscious that the relations between them was that of a merely formal friendship, based altogether on political interest. In a letter written from Nikolsburg on August 10th, Bismarck’s confidant, the diarist Abeken, spoke of Napoleon’s “flattering speeches,” and added: “We pay him back in his own coin.” There was this difference, however, between the men who thus dissembled their feelings, that while Bismarck’s profession of amity were wholly feigned, those of Napoleon were at least sincere in part and with more ingenuous dealings on the other side might have been sincere altogether.

Bismarck has confessed that down to 1867 he had no reason to believe that France thought of war with Prussia, while he, on the contrary, “always regarded a war with France as an indispensable condition of the national development of Germany.” After 1866, when Napoleon had come between Prussia and her victim, his belief in such a war as merely historically inevitable gave place to a conviction that it was an urgent political necessity. Writing from the midst of the royal and Ministerial circles which had gathered at Ems in the summer of 1867, Abeken, from whom no secrets were hidden, reported (July 27th): “There is a general feeling here that there will never be peace until after a war with France, though every one agrees in thinking that neither Louis Napoleon nor the French nation desires war.”

For France it was a task of immense difficulty to accommodate herself to the new conjuncture created by the events of 1864 to 1867,

and to determine upon an attitude which, while just to Prussia, should also be safe and advantageous for herself. The question of immediate interest was that of the future relations of North and South Germany. Here one great yet excusable miscalculation vitiated most French speculations and plans – the belief that North and South were so far apart in sentiment and sympathy that union was improbable, and hence that for practical purposes the Southern States might be counted against Prussia in any new combinations which time and events might create. Upon this belief France counted too strongly, making it for a time the pivot of her policy towards Prussia, with untoward results. For the conviction that the two parts of Germany had no desire for union encouraged a disposition to view with hostility any efforts to draw them more closely together.

Looking back upon the course of events, it is superficial wisdom to say that the North German Confederation was bound to have as its sequel the complete unity of the German tribes. No doubt it was, but even in Germany few people believed that the sequel would come so speedily, and there were many statesmen and publicists of the leading rank who still held that a separate Confederation of the South German States was at least a possible alternative. When such uncertainty as to the future prevailed in Germany, it was inevitable that the French mind, with its proneness to rapid conclusions and surface judgments, should misinterpret the signs of the times. There were, indeed, in those days many Frenchmen who contended, with no justification save a boundless credulity, that the Prussian superiority attested by Sadowa was a fiction and that the structure of German alliances built upon it would collapse like a pack of cards before the first strong gust of particularist feeling. Foremost amongst these was Drouyn de Lhuys, the Foreign Minister, whose bitter anti-Prussian sentiment led him to the conclusion that French policy must be directed towards keeping Germany disunited, since an all- German Confederation would only be Prussia enlarged.

It was only a small minority of thoughtful men who, taking accurate measure of the Prussian statesman with whom France had now to deal, as well as of the forces which were at work in German politics, saw clearly that the unity movement could not stop at the Main. The influence of these men was on the side of vigilance and caution. Adolphe Thiers and Émile Ollivier were among the little band

of disregarded seers who were firmly convinced that complete unity, though deferred, was certain, and Ollivier, at least, believed that France would serve her true interests by accepting it frankly and generously. Thiers, though his hostility to Prussia was strong and deep, saw clearly the inexorable trend of events, and he showed true prophetic insight in a speech which he made in the *Corps Législatif* on May 3, 1866, just before the outbreak of the Bohemian war. "What is certain," he said, "is that if the war is successful for Prussia that Power will take possession of some of the States in the North and those which she does not annex she will bring under her influence. Prussia will thus have one section of the German nation under her direct authority and the other under her indirect authority; and then Austria will be admitted as a *protégée* in this new order of things. Then, permit me to tell you, there will be accomplished the great phenomenon towards which events have been tending for more than a century; we shall see the establishment of a new German Empire."

Thiers' speech created a powerful impression upon his hearers, and the suggestion in which he epitomized his monitions, that France should protest against the further extension of the German unity movement, justifying her action by the treaties of 1815, had a dramatic sequel. Several days later (May 6th) the Emperor used at Auxerre the significant words, "As for the treaties of 1815, of which we are reminded, I abhor them?"

In the same assembly a year later (March 15, 1867), when Bavaria and Würtemberg were trying to bring Austria back into the German fold, Ollivier combated the persistent unbelief in the permanence of the new Confederation. "The deputy has told us," he said, "that what Bismarck has created will not endure. He is wrong; not only will it endure, but it will develop further. The day will come, sooner or later, but inevitably, when, the Northern Confederation having been definitely constituted, and the South German Confederation having been organized for military purposes on the Prussian system, these two unions will join hands across the Main in spite of the Treaty of Prague." Unlike Thiers, however, Ollivier frankly repudiated an anti-Prussian attitude, and claimed that the true policy of France was to regard Prussia as a friend until her acts proved her to be a foe. Replying for the Government (March 18th), Rouher repudiated hostility to the German unity movement and avowed his conviction

that the attitude of Prussia to France was unprovocative, yet said that if Prussia were to develop aggressive designs against the independence of her neighbours neither France nor Great Britain would be able to look on passively.

This debate had an echo in Berlin, where the constituent assembly of the North German Confederation was at the time deliberating upon a constitution. For the moment this subject was put on one side, and the delegates discussed the European situation. An interpellation was by arrangement addressed to the Government (March 19th) asking whether a promise had been obtained from the States outside the Confederation that they would not enter into alliances which might endanger the safety of Germany or prejudice further unity. Although Bismarck coyly protested that this was an awkward question, he had no hesitation in promptly divulging the defensive and offensive treaties with Bavaria, Würtemberg, Baden, and Hesse.

For Napoleon in particular Prussia's success had been a bitter surprise, and it had thrown him for a time entirely out of his political bearings. In 1863, when the question of German unity seemed to be maturing owing to the quarrel over the Elbe duchies, he had said: "I shall always be consistent in my policy. Having fought for Italian independence and raised my voice for Polish nationality, I shall be unable to entertain other sentiments or obey other principles in Germany." He meant this then, and perhaps he meant it still, but frank acceptance of his own theories was difficult now that the duty of making a clear and unambiguous stand could no longer be evaded. For once his master principles of nationality, equilibrium, and compensations came into a conflict which it seemed impossible to resolve. Each of these principles, standing alone, appeared perfectly reasonable and tenable. What Napoleon too easily ignored, or at least minimized, was the difficulty of reconciling these principles and applying them in conjunction – the fact that any rigorous attempt to realize the principle of nationality on a large scale could only be made at the expense of the principle of equilibrium, and that any disturbance of the Continental equilibrium must bring into play the doctrine of compensations, with all its entanglements and risks.

He had never opposed the German unity movement as such, even though he had ceased to give to it a friendly and ready recognition, from a growing suspicion that in helping Prussia to eject Austria from

Germany he had been helping to create a rival Power which might menace the position of France. Hence it was that his influence now, however much he might try to hide the fact in specious phrases, was bound to be directed towards keeping Germany divided into two spheres of influence, one under the leadership of Prussia, since that could no longer be prevented, the other reserved for Austria, perhaps under his own patronage.

It was one of the greatest disappointments of Napoleon's career that in application to the German question his policy of compensations, to himself so obvious and equitable, failed altogether to work. Incidental reference has already been made to the negotiations, *démarches, pourparlers* – call them what we will – on the subject of territorial acquisitions, which took place on sundry occasions between Bismarck and Benedetti in Berlin and elsewhere, and between Napoleon and his Foreign Minister and the Prussian ambassador, Count von der Goltz, in Paris. The present is a convenient place in which to sum up all that needs to be said further on this subject before it is allowed to disappear from the narrative. The story is, and will remain, an obscure page in the political history of the period, nor is it likely that completer knowledge would make it more edifying. It is obscure for the sufficient reason that on the Prussian side little that is really illuminating was put into writing, so that the authorities upon whom we have to rely are chiefly French. Bismarck's public contributions to the story were for the most part confined to later denials of acts and words of a compromising kind attributed to him by hostile witnesses There was a reason for Bismarck's lifelong prejudice against the use of documents in diplomatic intercourse. Documents tell tales: conversations "under four eyes" can take place with the assurance that it is always possible to question the accuracy, and if need be disclaim the authorship, of unguarded confidences which have been inconveniently divulged. Moreover, equivocation is difficult in writing; sooner or later the time comes when choice has to be made between frankness or silence. That was why Bismarck had no patience with the voluminous epistles of the British Foreign Office, the traditional inscription of whose letters, "Yours in truth and sincerity," must have continually jarred upon his sensitive feelings. It was his belief in the permissibility of equivocation as a fair weapon in diplomacy, and his unwillingness to abandon its use, that led him in

the North German Diet to disapprove of the publication of blue books of the English type. For if they were introduced, he said (April 22, 1869), "I should be compelled to write two despatches on the same subject, one intended for practical effect in diplomacy and one which I intended to publish."

How far, then, did Bismarck wilfully deceive Napoleon on the question of compensations? If we would learn his true attitude towards France and the Emperor, we must go to utterances in which he could not be otherwise than ingenuous. Such an utterance is the report which as Prussian envoy to the Frankfort Diet he addressed to his Government on May 10, 1856. Speaking of foreign relationships in general and of those with France in particular, he there said: "Our relations with France for the time being must be such as will allow us at any moment to draw nearer to her without injury or humiliation to ourselves, and that the other Courts may remain under the impression that such a course is open to us." He wrote to his friend Ludwig von Gerlach in the same sense on May 2nd of the following year: "France counts for me merely as a piece, though an essential piece, in the game of political chess. . . . Courtesy is a cheap coin, and if it does no further service than that of ridding the others of the belief that they are always sure of France against us, and we at all times in want of help against France, that is a great point gained for the diplomacy of peace."

France was, in fact, to be used for Prussia's purposes, yet without any idea of rendering an equivalent. No statesman was cleverer than Bismarck in exploiting the mistakes and weaknesses of his fellow-men, and Napoleon's obsession on the subject of territorial compensations placed in his hands a weapon which he was constantly able to employ to advantage. As early as June, 1850, Napoleon, in a conversation with Count Hatzfeldt in Paris, had tried to win Prussia for an alliance the cost of which was to be paid out of another pocket, for all Prussia was to be asked to do was to agree to the cession to France of Bavarian territory left of the Rhine. Nothing came of the suggestion, but after being abandoned for a long time it was revived in a serious form directly Bismarck came upon the scene.

Even before he had become a Prussian Minister, Bismarck had earned the reputation of a man who showed the greatest moral courage in immoral enterprises. Referring to the idea of the

annexation of Luxemburg by France, as a set-off to Prussian acquisitions in North Germany – another project in which Napoleon already took interest – Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne, the French ambassador to Berlin, wrote to the Foreign Minister, Thouvenel, in April, 1862: "The only person I know to whom we could venture to make such proposals is Monsieur de Bismarck." A more impartial witness, Count Bernstorff, complained that in the first years of Bismarck's Ministry (it will be remembered that he took office in the autumn of 1862) there was "a lack of exact information respecting the dealings between the Prussian Government and Louis Napoleon." Even then an uneasy feeling prevailed that Bismarck was committing his country to indefinite obligations which might prove to be indiscreet and unrealizable.

The most cherished of all Napoleon's territorial ambitions was the restoration of the eastern frontiers of France to the limits recognized down to 1815, and this ambition grew the longer he reigned. The outwardly benevolent attitude which he adopted towards Prussia prior to and during the war of 1866 was unquestionably dictated by the hope of attaining or advancing towards this greatly desired goal. Benedetti repeatedly threw out feelers on the subject, and Bismarck never showed reluctance to discuss any new proposition which the French ambassador had to make. Benedetti goes further, and says that the accommodating Minister made counter-proposals of his own. On June 4, 1866, the ambassador reported to Drouyn de Lhuys the substance of a conversation in which he had pointedly asked Bismarck what France would obtain in the event of Prussia being victorious in the then imminent war and annexing territories in North Germany. Bismarck had at once replied that rather than give up Cologne, Bonn, or Mayence, he would "disappear from the political scene," but he "believed it to be not impossible to persuade the King to cede to us the banks of the Upper Moselle, which, joined with Luxemburg, where union with France would be favourably received, would rectify our frontier in a manner entirely satisfactory to us." "I could not tell," Benedetti naïvely adds, "whether Monsieur de Bismarck, in opening his mind to me in this connection without any special pretext, wished to sound me or to let you understand at once through me the concessions which he would be willing to offer you and those which we should abstain from asking of him, but I should not be surprised,

since expedients of this kind are habitual with him."

The negotiations at Nikolsburg which followed in July have already been referred to. On the part of France they were pursued with the greater justification since, in Paris, Count Goltz, genuinely convinced of his right to it, was at the time urging Napoleon to press for compensation, though he was of opinion that it should take the form of Luxemburg, and perhaps Belgium, rather than of Rhenish Hesse and the Bavarian Palatinate, as Napoleon wished. The colloquies at Nikolsburg, after Benedetti had communicated the result to his Government and obtained further instructions, led to the preparation of a draft agreement, which he placed before Bismarck on August 5th. By this agreement France was to regain the territories comprised within her frontiers in 1814 which had since belonged to Prussia, and Prussia was also to undertake to obtain for France from Bavaria and grand-ducal Hesse, in return for compensation, their lands on the left bank of the Rhine. On the following day Benedetti supplemented the draft by an interview with the Prussian Minister-President – the interview of which Bismarck gave so highly seasoned a version in the Imperial Diet on May 2, 1871. Benedetti, he said, abruptly appeared in his room, unexpected and unannounced, and presented the ultimatum "Either cede Mayence and the Palatinate or expect a declaration of war!" and was startled when he received the cool rejoinder, "Good, we will have war!" No man incapable of lively flights of imagination can be a good story-teller. Bismarck as a story-teller was incomparable, and he never spoiled the effect of his narratives by any scruple about literal accuracy; the careful student of this fascinating causeur knows that he retouched many of his stories for greater effect. Benedetti likewise records the interview, and that it took this very dramatic form is very improbable. The ambassador, we are told, repeated the substance of the draft agreement, and Bismarck declined to consider it seriously, but he did so in a manner "*convenable et courtois*" – the manner which up to that time the wary Minister had held in all his dealings with Napoleon and France; and compensation in other directions, and naturally out of Germany, was suggested.

Whatever the exact form of words, however, refusal it was, definite and final. Bismarck no longer feared Napoleon, not only because peace had been concluded, but still more because Napoleon had revealed himself to be a weakling. A man who could be put off

with mere words, as he had been at Nikolsburg, and so often before, was not likely to cause serious difficulty. Bismarck did not give Napoleon time to reflect upon what he should do, but published in a French newspaper an article in which the Emperor was stated to have demanded from Prussia the cession of Rhenish territory, and to have met with a rebuff. The news promptly came back to Germany, as was intended, and created an angry outcry.

Benedetti himself appears to have reported the conversation to Paris in terms so discouraging that the Emperor now finally abandoned the idea of German acquisitions. He wrote on August 12th to the Minister of the Interior, the Marquis de la Valette: "That convention should have been kept secret, but it has been talked about abroad, and the newspapers go as far as to say that the Rhenish provinces have been refused us. It is evident from the conversation with Benedetti that we should have all Germany against us for a very small advantage. It is important that public opinion should not go astray on the subject. Contradict energetically, therefore, these rumours in the newspapers. . . . The true interest of France is not to obtain an insignificant increase of territory, but to assist Germany to organize herself in the way most favourable to our interests and those of Europe." Benedetti was instructed to ask Bismarck to regard the overture as *non avenu* – a request easier to make than to fulfil.

Wishing to dispel earlier reflections upon his reputation as a schemer against his country's interests, Bismarck seems to have told the Crown Prince about this and other proposals of Napoleon, for the Prince wrote to him on August 9th: "The evidences of Napoleonic hunger which you have sent me are most remarkable. . . . If Napoleon persists in hankering after the whole left bank of the Rhine, we shall have every reason to be grateful to him for helping us towards the speedy union of Germany under one head."

That Bismarck was ever prepared to assent to the cession to France of either Prussian or Hessian or Bavarian territory is in the highest degree improbable, though up to this time there were countrymen of his in high places, like Prince Hohenlohe, Count Bernstorff, and Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, who held the contrary. If, however, he must be acquitted of such a design, it is certain that he allowed, and even encouraged, Napoleon to believe that a transaction of the kind was practicable, and made more or less explicit promises to that effect.

Certainly the claim which has been advanced on his behalf by some of his admirers that he was really a chaste Joseph, cruelly exposed to the wiles of the French seductress, is too ludicrous for serious refutation. The most plausible defence of his conduct in the matter is his own, contained in a letter which he wrote to the German Emperor on September 10, 1873, when meeting charges of deceit brought against him by the Italian statesman La Marmora. “I could meet the Napoleonic policy,” he said, “only by always giving Benedetti and the Italians, who keep nothing secret from Napoleon, to understand that I was quite inclined to stray from the path of virtue, but that my most gracious master was not, and that I must have time to persuade your Majesty. Your Majesty knows that I never attempted to do this, but the French belief that I was working at it was very useful to us.”

The infatuated Busch, whose apologies for his hero are usually thoroughgoing rather than discriminating, tells the truth bluntly when he writes that “ Bismarck had never held out any distinct hopes to Napoleon, nor yet definitely refused to acquiesce in his wishes, but *had kept him in tow*.” But Bismarck, on his own admission, both deceived Napoleon and lied in doing this. In all these mysterious dealings, however, he was not seeking to sell his country, but France. Napoleon may have been a dull dog to fall into the trap which had been so ingeniously laid for him, but the snare was no more defensible or more sportsmanlike than man-traps usually are; perhaps it was less so, for in this case the snare was set by one poacher in order to catch another. Certainly there is no need to waste tears over Napoleon and his discomfiture. He had engaged in an immoral transaction, and the fact that of the two schemers Bismarck on the whole was probably the less scrupulous does not redeem the sordidness of his own part in the long catena of intrigue. With Bismarck it was the policy that was crooked, with Napoleon the will. One of the most discerning students of character, the Prince Consort, said of the Emperor drastically but truly that he had been “born and bred a conspirator.”

Instead of making him more cautious, his failure in the negotiations with Bismarck over the cession of German territory only sharpened Napoleon’s eagerness to obtain compensation elsewhere. It was a serious disadvantage of his position as the elected head of a virtually republican monarchy that he was always conscious that the eyes of the nation were upon him, that he held his position by favour,

and that he was expected to justify it by furnishing impressive results. He had to reckon also with the temperament of a people which constitutionally had in the course of a century been all things by turn and nothing long, and whose fondness for new things was as pronounced in relation to politics as to *primeurs*. He hated, too, the idea of isolation, not only because it exposed France to possible danger, but because it seemed to indicate political failure and a loss of prestige. If the frontiers of 1814 were not to be won back, an enlargement somewhere else would at least retrieve his position. Prussia's success with the federation of the North German States and the prospect of the States of the South passing under her leadership, if not her control, seem to have suggested to him the idea of gathering under his own wing some of the little borderland countries – Belgium, Luxemburg, Holland, Switzerland. To the first two of these both Bismarck and Goltz had repeatedly pointed as fairly coming within the sphere of French influence.

Accordingly, barely a week after he had been refused a rectification of his German frontier, Napoleon approached Bismarck again through Benedetti with the request that he would assist him in acquiring Belgium and Luxemburg, regardless of the fact that the independence and neutrality of Belgium were guaranteed by a treaty of 1839, to which France and Prussia, with the other Great Powers, were parties. As Ollivier has shown, a draft treaty was prepared in Paris, and duly submitted by the French ambassador to Bismarck. By it France was to acquiesce in the territorial gains made by Prussia in the late war – in other words, to recognize as accomplished facts which could not be undone – and to offer no objection to the formation of a union of the North German Confederation with the Southern States, while Prussia in return was to help France to acquire the sovereignty of Luxemburg from the King of the Netherlands in return for compensation, and to sanction the military occupation or conquest of Belgium. Bismarck, as usual, listened patiently to all that Benedetti had to say and even discussed the proposals with him, but declined to give a definite promise. Nevertheless, he took care to retain Benedetti's draft, anticipating that it might one day prove useful.

When a little later the negotiations became known to the other Governments interested in the treaty of 1839, Napoleon did not hesitate to declare that the suggestion that he should occupy Belgium

came from Prussia and that he had rejected it with indignation. It may be true that the earliest promptings emanated from that quarter, but the apology was none the less a prevarication. This repudiation was followed by a circular letter to the French embassies (September 16th) which was intended to rehabilitate France with the Powers and to remove cause for further alarm in the little frontier States. In this letter M. de la Valette – now acting provisionally as Foreign Minister in place of Drouyn de Lhuys, who had resigned – pointed out that by the advance of Prussia into the ranks of the Great Powers the old traditions and State combinations had been broken down, leaving all countries free to rearrange their associations and make a new start. France, as the champion of the principle of nationality, could not grudge Germany the unity she desired, or make the consolidation of that country a pretext for any indiscriminate accession of territory; she desired no aggrandizement that did not proceed from the voluntary action of the populations concerned.

Henceforth still another corner of Naboth's vineyard was immune from French molestation. Nevertheless, in Bismarck's eyes Napoleon played the fool in the Belgian annexation question, and his fault was not that he wished to commit a crime, but that, having the will, he had not the courage to do it: his was the cowardice of "the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin." Recalling the episode during a conversation with Busch during the war of 1870, he said that the Emperor should have taken Belgium by a bold *coup*, but added that he was ever, and still remained, "a muddle-headed fellow."

Annexations in Germany and Belgium being both beyond his reach, there now remained for Napoleon only one hope, the acquisition of Luxemburg by the prosaically honest method of purchase. It was in regard to this, his final experiment with the policy of compensations, that he believed Bismarck to have treated him most scurvily. Whatever might be said of the propriety of the Emperor's designs in this instance, they were at least open and above-board. In some respects the position of the grand duchy bore likeness to that of Schleswig and Holstein before their annexation by Prussia. Like the Elbe duchies, Luxemburg was connected by personal union with an adjoining kingdom: the King of the Netherlands was its Grand Duke and his brother, Prince Henry, acted as Stadholder. In all internal matters, too, the grand duchy, was as independent as the Elbe duchies

had been in relation to Denmark. Luxemburg also, like Holstein, had been a member of the old Bund. It was troubled, indeed, by no dispute as to title or succession, yet on the other hand it had to tolerate an arrangement by which the fortress of the capital town was manned until 1856, by a joint Prussian and Dutch garrison, three-quarters being Prussian troops, but since that date by Prussians only.

After the dissolution of the Bund the grand duchy became entirely independent of Germany and was free to go its own way, subject only to the acquiescence of its ruler. The chances of a successful bargain, therefore, were at least favourable to France. Now, at Napoleon's request, Bismarck undertook to advise the King of Prussia to withdraw his troops from the garrison. At the same time he recommended Napoleon to begin an agitation in the country on his own account in favour of annexation, adding that if the Emperor could persuade Holland to part with the grand duchy by sale Prussia would not stand in the way.

Disappointed at Bismarck's coolness in the matter, doubting his sincerity, and fearing also that the scheme would raise in Europe a storm which it would be difficult to allay, Napoleon broke off negotiations for a time. When early in 1867 he reopened the question, it was in the form of an invitation to the Powers to say if they would object to annexation. Russia was favourable, England indifferent, while Austria warned him that the proposal might excite national feeling in Germany and possibly lead to war. Relying upon the support of Prussia – now head of the North German Confederation – Napoleon in March offered to buy out the King of the Netherlands. The King was willing, only stipulating for Prussia's agreement, and on being reassured by the Emperor on this point he accepted the terms of the necessary treaties, and it seemed as if all that remained to be done was to obtain from Berlin a formal endorsement of the transaction.

On April 1st Benedetti waited on Bismarck for this purpose. Suspecting the object of his visit, the Minister put him off with the excuse that he was just about to go to the Diet, where he had to answer an interpellation upon the Luxemburg question. The question which he had to answer – by a well- known trick of parliamentary life it had been arranged beforehand – was this: Had the Federal Government any knowledge that France was angling for possession of the grand duchy? The answer given by the Chancellor was that he had

no reason to believe that a treaty of annexation had yet been concluded, but he could not say the opposite; in any event, the Government would safeguard the just rights of the German States and populations should they be threatened, and he was sure that it would be possible to do that by peaceable means. Old parliamentarian though he was, Bismarck was not prepared for the passionate outburst which followed. From all sides of the house rose a chorus of protest that France should even have contemplated the appropriation of a "piece of old Germany." After obtaining from the Bavarian Government in the course of the day an assurance that in the event of complications arising with France over the question Bavaria would stand by the Confederation, Bismarck instructed Count Goltz to warn the French Government that in face of the strong national feeling which had shown itself in Germany France would be unwise to take any further public step in the matter, at any rate for the present, and the warning was delivered the same evening. Once more Napoleon found himself checkmated, and by the same hand.

Sybel, whose misfortune it was to have written contemporary history while still under the intoxicating influence of the successful wars of 1866 and of 1870, contends that on Bismarck's part there had been no equivocation: he had given no definite pledge, for nothing had been put down in writing. Napoleon did not take that view, but believed that once again he had been intentionally ensnared and entrapped. Bismarck had advised the Luxemburg transaction and had promised his support; the King of the Netherlands had given his assent; the treaty of cession was ready for signature; yet at the last moment the entire plan was wrecked, as his other territorial plans had been wrecked, by his rival's shiftiness. It looked like a deliberate plot to put France in a false position and damage her credit in the eyes of Europe, and Napoleon told the German ambassador so. Now in disgust he withdrew from the affair, and in revenge for Bismarck's treatment of him determined to challenge Prussia's right to continue to occupy in the name of the dissolved Bund a fortress which was no longer a federal fortress.

Accordingly, on April 15th the French Government invited Great Britain, Russia, and Austria to say whether in their opinion the time for Prussia's withdrawal from Luxemburg had not arrived. The response not being decisive, Czar Alexander II proposed a conference

of the Powers with a view to agreement upon a joint guarantee of Luxemburg's neutrality and independence, and the proposal found general acceptance. Prussia made no difficulty, though Bismarck added a black mark to Napoleon's mounting score.1 The conference met in London on May 7th, and by the 11th a convention had been signed under which the Powers confirmed the settlement of 1839 securing succession to the grand duchy to the house of Orange Nassau(the royal family of the Netherlands), and assured a collective guarantee of the grand duchy's neutrality. While Prussia undertook to withdraw her garrison from the city of Luxemburg, the treaty stipulated that the fortress should thereafter be converted into an open city, and that no military establishment should henceforth be maintained or created there. Ratifications were exchanged on May 31st. The British delegate had wished the conference to stop at a declaration that the grand duchy should be neutral in perpetuity and that the Powers would respect its neutrality. It was due to a proposal of the Prussian delegate, Count Bernstorff – acting on the suggestion of his Russian colleague, Baron Brunnow – that the guarantee of Luxemburg's neutrality was given in collective form.

Of all Napoleon's barren hunts for territorial compensation the Luxemburg one was to him the most aggravating, for in this transaction he had really tried to act virtuously. It is not surprising that he should have attributed to the Minister who was able not only to carry to success his own schemes but to wreck the schemes of others a dæmonic power or that he came to see his hand in every one of his reverses. Always in his diplomacy he was haunted by the suspicion that Bismarck was intriguing against him; henceforth in every important move, in every vital decision, his first thought was of the German Chancellor – of what he would think or say or do.

Compelled at last to admit that in Bismarck he had found his master, he seems for a time to have come to the conclusion that to work against him was like working against fate, and that the only safe course for France was to cultivate his goodwill. Explaining in a speech from the throne at the end of the year the policy which he intended that France should follow, he said (November 18, 1867): "In spite of the declarations of my Government, whose pacific attitude has never changed, the belief has prevailed that any transformation of the domestic policy of Germany must be a cause of conflict. This condition

of uncertainty must last no longer. We must frankly accept the changes which have been introduced across the Rhine and let it be known that so long as our interests and our dignity are not threatened we shall not interfere with the changes, which have been evoked by the wish of the German nation."

Even now, however, he could not bring himself to accept the view that unity should extend beyond the Main, and it was in this sense that he wished the Treaty of Prague to be interpreted. He wanted the Southern States to be free, as under that treaty they were intended to be, to enter into a union of their own or not, as they pleased, and for the rest to be allowed to go their own way without Prussian compulsion or interference. Secretly he hoped that Austria would still succeed in attaching these States to herself, so creating a counterpoise to the powerful Confederation of the North, though as an alternative he entertained as late as 1868 the crazy idea of the federation of the States with Switzerland. A breath from Lord Clarendon, to whom Napoleon had confided his secret, was sufficient to explode the bubble. The readiness with which the Southern States had entered into a military alliance with Prussia had perplexed and pained him, vet so little does he appear to have abandoned the hope of keeping North and South apart that he could say to the same statesman in October, 1868: "I can guarantee peace only so long as Bismarck respects the present status; if he draws the South German States into the Northern Confederation, our guns will go off of themselves."

Yet Napoleon emphatically did not want war, but was profoundly convinced that the interests of France, of the Empire, and, not least, of his dynasty, were bound up with peace. He gave an earnest of his desire for international accord by instituting the great Paris exhibition which was opened in April, 1867. During that festival of peace the lions and lambs of European politics, at his invitation, sat down together at the board of equality and fraternity. Most of the crowned heads of Europe with their Ministers – among the number the King of Prussia with Bismarck and Czar Alexander II with Gortchakoff – accepted his hospitality; there was a general exchange of courtesies, and conferences of all nations met for traffic in ideas helpful to the progress of mankind.

No Frenchman of the time saw more clearly the drift of events in Germany and the true interest of France in relation to them than

Benedetti, who was still serving his country well in Berlin. Throughout the whole of his relationships with the Prussian Court and Government, Benedetti seems to have done his best to promote confidence between Paris and Berlin. He also persisted in believing, even in face of wholesale incredulity and apprehension at home, that Bismarck's policy on the whole was not intended to be hostile to France, subject only to one important condition – that France should not cross Prussia's path. In one of his many despatches on the subject he wrote of Bismarck (January 1, 1868): "What is his objective. what the end he is pursuing? It is not to attack us; I have said it already, and I repeat it at the risk of assuming a great responsibility, because such is my profound conviction; his aim is to free the Main and to unite the South of Germany to the North under the authority of the King of Prussia, and I will add that he intends to attain it if needful by arms should France openly put obstacles in his way."

Benedetti also, if not a sympathetic friend, was at least not an enemy of German unity, which he regarded as inevitable and legitimate, and he was one of the few Frenchmen of that time who recognized Prussia's strength and the risks which would be involved by a quarrel with her. Accordingly, he had strongly urged upon his Government the acceptance of a policy of conciliation, with candour in avowing and sincerity in applying it, yet warning his Government that if such a policy was rejected France must prepare for war, since war there would be. "The union of Germany will shortly be achieved – should we accept it?" he wrote. "In that event, let us not disguise the fact that we welcome it benevolently; let us reassure Prussia; she will then detach herself from Russia, and the industrial and commercial condition of Europe will recover from its distress. In the opposite event, let us prepare for war without rest, and let us calculate in advance what assistance Austria can offer us; let us determine our conduct in such a way as to settle in turn first the Eastern question and then the question of Italy. We shall not be too strong if we are to be victorious on the Rhine. The campaign of 1866 has superabundantly shown the dangers of a struggle waged on both sides of the Alps."

Fearing that events beyond his power to control were forcing France and Prussia into a relationship which might only too easily become one of irreconcilable antagonism, and overcome by the old

dread of isolation, Napoleon early in 1869 sought to establish his relations with Austria and Italy on a new and firmer basis. In the previous year, Marshal Niel, the Minister of War, had carried, against a hostile Chamber, a moderate scheme of army reform, increasing the field force and reserve both in numbers and efficiency. Unconvinced that France could safely rely upon her own resources and declining for the moment to fall in with a proposal for reciprocal disarmament which was pressed upon him by Prince Metternich, the Austrian ambassador, and Count Vitzthum, the Saxon envoy, Napoleon now conceived the idea of a triple alliance. He opened negotiations with Austria. To Metternich he proposed an unconditional alliance, and was met with the counter-proposal that the alliance should be of a purely defensive character. A draft treaty on this basis was submitted to the Emperor Francis Joseph in March. It pledged the three Powers to take diplomatic action together on every question calling for decision in the East or West, but Austria reserved the right to declare neutrality should France begin a war against Prussia.

Italy was then invited to join, and here Napoleon's overtures led to an equally indecisive result. Victor Emmanuel's first thought was that a formal alliance with France was neither needful nor politic; it was not needful, because his personal attachment to Napoleon justified him in believing that the Emperor, who had done so much for Italy, would not spoil his own handiwork; it was impolitic, because at that time the national feeling towards France was unfriendly owing to her attitude over the papal question. Five years before, by a treaty of September 15, 1864, Napoleon had undertaken to remove his troops from Rome within two years on condition that the King of Italy would not enter. The Pope was to form a volunteer force, composed of Italian Roman Catholic soldiers, sufficient for the security of the Papal State, but to be used for no other purpose. By the end of 1866 the French withdrawal was completed. Nine months later Garibaldi, gathering together his red-shirts, broke out again and marched on the undefended capital. Napoleon went to the rescue, as in duty bound (November, 1867), and, after ejecting the intruders, replaced the French garrison, an act sorely resented by the Italian nation. Although unable to persuade Napoleon to quit the papal dominion at once, Victor Emmanuel agreed to enter into an alliance of a purely defensive character on condition that it should not be directed against Prussia or

German unity, and that in the event of war occurring Italy should be able to remain neutral until the French troops had withdrawn from Rome.

Whittled down in this way at both ends, the alliance lost attraction for Napoleon, for it was evident that it would be impossible to count on either of his friends in the very emergency which it was designed to meet, and he therefore let the matter drop and pigeon-holed the draft for future consideration. In the end the three Sovereigns were satisfied with an exchange of assurances that none of them would conclude an alliance with any other State without the knowledge of his two friends.

It is probable that the unwillingness of the rulers of Austria and Italy to commit themselves further was justified by another proof of Napoleon's uncertain judgment which had been afforded a short time before. This was his ill-considered attempt to assert for France in Belgium, in round-about fashion, a controlling economic influence in place of the political sovereignty which had been refused to him. At his instigation, and with his guarantee, the French Eastern Railway Company in the late autumn of 1868 entered into negotiations with two Belgian railway companies, and simultaneously with a Dutch company, for the purchase of their lines, which were in due course to pass under the control of the State. The negotiations led in December to the conclusion of contracts of sale on very liberal terms. No sooner did the affair become known than the Belgian people, suspecting a new design of annexation, raised a storm of protest, and the Government, reflecting the national sentiment, declared in the Second Chamber, after a vehement debate, that in no circumstances would a transaction so contrary to the public interest and so menacing to the country's political independence be allowed to stand. In the following month the British Government also, jealous for the integrity of the neutrality treaty of 1839, made known its hostility to the contract in firm though unprovocative language. The Belgian companies, however, had made a good bargain, and they were not sorry when the French company held them to the contract. On the last day of January the legal formalities were completed, and both parties to the transaction professed to regard the matter as closed. In the meantime national feeling had become still more deeply stirred, so that when the Ministry invited parliament to arm it with a law, having retroactive

effect, making any such alienation of Belgian property dependent upon the assent of the Government, the law was voted by both chambers with practical unanimity. Without delay the obnoxious contract was annulled.

Notwithstanding his rebuffs, Napoleon in 1870 came back to the triple alliance idea in another form. Early in that year the Austrian Archduke Albrecht, the victor of Custozza, visited the South of France, and before returning home stayed for some time in Paris, where he conferred with the heads of the army. In a later conversation with the Emperor he suggested a plan of campaign, to meet the eventuality of a war with Germany, according to which Austrian, French, and Italian armies were in that case to march simultaneously on South Bavaria, Stuttgart, and Munich respectively. Napoleon submitted the plan to his generals, who were impressed more by its defects than its merits. They therefore drew up an alternative scheme, and with this General Lebrun was despatched on a confidential mission to Vienna in June. The Archduke was won over, but the last word rested with the Emperor, of whom Lebrun accordingly sought an audience. The result was the polite but decisive rejection of the carefully prepared design; it was, the Emperor said, an excellent arrangement from the military standpoint, but altogether inexpedient and impossible from the political. In no circumstances, he informed the envoy, would he promise to take part in a war against Prussia, and it was his wish that his imperial friend might be acquainted with that decision. Not without reason did Lebrun, on returning to Paris, report to Napoleon that as an ally Austria was quite un satisfactory and not to be relied on, a warning which was not taken to heart. It is significant of Napoleon's uncertain attitude towards his Ministers that he never told them of the purpose or the results of Lebrun's secret mission. Ollivier relates that he only heard of the incident by accident from Lebrun, who was ignorant that he, the head of the Cabinet, had been kept in the dark.

A strong reason at that time indisposed the Austrian Emperor to enter into any arrangement which could be interpreted as a sign of hostility to Prussia, for a distinct improvement had just taken place in the relationships of the Courts of Vienna and Berlin. When in the autumn of 1869 it was decided that the Crown Prince Frederick should represent the King at the opening of the Suez Canal in

pursuance of the Khedive's invitation to the crowned heads of Europe, the idea was suggested that his journey to the South would afford a favourable opportunity for greeting the Austrian Emperor in his own capital. An inquiry in Vienna as to the timeliness of such a visit was received with unexpected cordiality. No messenger of peace more tactful or more chivalrous could have been chosen than the man who had to the last deprecated war between Prussia and Austria as a war between brethren. He arrived in Vienna on October 7th, and from the moment of his reception at the railway station by the Emperor to his departure the imperial family did their utmost to give the visit the character of a formal reconciliation. Even Count Beust seemed disposed to bury the hatchet. The meeting was recognized in both countries as the beginning of a new era in their relationships, and this impression was deepened by the friendly intercourse which took place between the Emperor and the Crown Prince during their visit to Egypt. The first-fruits of the *entente* was the Emperor's refusal to enter into any binding engagement with France.

The following year, the year of blood *par excellence* of the nineteenth century, was ushered in by earnests of peace and concord on many sides. One of the German historians of the New Empire, Ottokar Lorenz, admits that "It is justifiable to regard as honestly intended Napoleon's professions of peace at the end of 1869 and the programme of the new Ollivier Ministry." The affairs of France had just before passed into the hands of a Government which was sincerely devoted to peace. In the preceding September France had become a constitutional monarchy, and the political and Ministerial changes entailed promised to make still more decidedly for amicable relationships with Prussia and the rest of Europe. On January 2, 1870, the Ministry of M. Émile Ollivier was formed and the career of the "Liberal Empire" began. There was a reassortment of offices, as a result of which Count Daru was given the portfolio of Foreign Affairs and Lebœuf that of War.

One of Daru's first public acts was a proposal that France should invite Prussia to join in a measure of partial disarmament, as a means of relieving the tension between the two Powers and of convincing the rest of Europe that it was their wish and intention to be good neighbours. The Emperor, though sceptical, was not unwilling, but he would not agree to approach Bismarck direct, convinced that that way

lay certain failure. “I do not wish,” he said, “to make another direct overture. I tried it in 1863, and it did not succeed. I am not opposed to you trying through the mediation of Lord Clarendon, whom I know to be favourable to the idea.” Daru accordingly sounded the British Government on the subject, and was gratified to learn that the “commercial traveller for peace” was willing to “risk a snub” in so good a cause. It was a condition of the overtures that Bismarck was not to be told that they were made at the prompting of the French Government. Clarendon discharged his mission with all his accustomed tact, though without the success for which he had hoped. He put the question before Bismarck in a despatch of February 2nd, addressed to the British ambassador in Berlin, Lord Augustus Loftus, in which, after dwelling upon the pacific character of the French Government and the security of Prussia’s position, he appealed to him and the King to lead the way towards the gradual abandonment of the oppressive system of large standing armies, which was becoming a serious source of social discontent and a menace to civilization.

Bismarck received the admonition – for such, for all its amiability, Lord Clarendon’s appeal was – in good part, and duly returned a courteous reply. This was a regretful refusal to consider the proposal or even place it before the King, on the ground of the impossibility of persuading him to agree to a course which was inconsistent with Prussia’s difficult geographical position and her uncertain relationships with the Powers able to do her evil. Daru regarded it as a gain that Bismarck should have been willing to discuss a topic so alien to his sympathies, and begged Clarendon not to think himself beaten and not to be discouraged, promising that he would shortly give him the opportunity of returning to the charge. In the meantime, Daru declared that he would set an example by reducing the annual levies by 10,000, implying, on the basis of nine years’ service, an eventual reduction of 90,000 men.

On March 9th, in a second eloquent letter, Clarendon “fired another shot at Bismarck,” though this time with far less hope of effect. The old reasons were repeated in greater detail, but he clinched his case for disarmament by an argument which must have sounded strange in Berlin.

“Count Bismarck will admit,” he wrote, “and I am sure that a statesman so liberal and far-sighted will admit without regret, that the

people everywhere are claiming and must obtain a larger share in the administration of their own affairs, and that in proportion as they do so the chances of causeless wars will diminish. The people well understand the horrors of war and that they and not their rulers are the real sufferers; they equally understand and will daily become more impatient of the taxation for costly preparations for war which in themselves endanger peace, and I believe that there is at this moment no surer road to solid popularity for a Government than attending to the wants and wishes of the people on the subject of disarmament."

The passage is reproduced not because its force was seriously discounted by the fact that Clarendon's appeal did not imply that his own country was prepared to emulate Prussia, in well- doing, though the expenditure of Great Britain on armaments was at that time more than three times that of Prussia, and more than twice that of the entire North German Confederation, but as an illustration of the failure of a very wise states- man to understand that the leading Minister of a military State like Prussia could not possibly be influenced by or appreciate a line of reasoning well suited to the British House of Commons. Nevertheless, at Clarendon's urgent wish, the question this time went direct to the King, who would not hear of disarmament in any form or degree. To the British ambassador Bismarck brusquely hinted that Clarendon's views were those of "a cool friend," were insular, and made no allowance for Germany's special danger; what would Clarendon say, he asked, if he were told that the peace of the world would be furthered if only Great Britain would cut down her inordinate naval estimates? From that time no more was heard of reciprocal disarmament.

Although Count Daru's proposal had failed, the intentions behind it were sincere; through him Napoleon had given the most convincing proof at his command of pacific intentions. To emphasize this attitude and the friendly disposition of his Government towards Prussia, Ollivier in March sent home a German journalist who visited him with the reassuring message, "There exists no German question at the present time."

Various constitutional changes were proposed in France at this time with the object of bringing the machinery of government into sympathy with the democratic spirit which the new Cabinet represented and Napoleon endorsed. Personal government was to

cease, yet not to be superseded by a parliamentary absolutism, for above both the Emperor and parliament the collective will of the nation, as expressed by the *plébiscite or referendum*, was henceforth to be supreme. These changes were submitted to a national vote on May 8th. " France desires liberty, but liberty with order," the Emperor had said to the legislature just before. "For order I am responsible. Help me, gentlemen, to endow her with liberty." The substantial issue put to the nation was, Should France henceforth be a liberalized constitutional monarchy? The actual reference upon which a vote was to be taken ran as follows:

"The nation approves the Liberal reforms effected in the constitution since 1860 by the Emperor in conjunction with the legislature and ratifies the resolution of the Senate (*senatus consultum*) of April 20, 1870."

This resolution of the Senate, as drawn up by Ollivier on the direction of Napoleon, transferred from that body to a *plébiscite* of the nation, to be ordered in every instance by the Emperor, all future amendments of the constitution; it established the Emperor in the exercise of his existing powers as head of the Government, such as the supreme command of the army, the appointment of Ministers, State officials, and members of the Senate, and the right to decide questions of war and peace, and confirmed the joint powers of the Emperor, the Senate, and the Chamber in regard to legislation. In their manifestos both the Emperor and the Ministry appealed to the nation in the cause of order, liberty, the security of the Empire, and the maintenance of the hereditary monarchy. "In 1852," ran the manifesto of the Ministers, "the Emperor sought power from the nation in order to secure order; in 1870 he seeks from it power in order to establish freedom. You are not voting upon the existence of the Empire, but only upon its development on Liberal principles. It is essential to assure our country a tranquil future, so that on the throne as in the poorest hut the son may succeed his father in peace."

The voting was an emphatic approval of the new order and of the men who had introduced it. All the forces of reaction and revolution were whipped up; Victor Hugo appealed against the Government theatrically in the name of "the citizens of the assassinated republic"; yet nearly seven and a half million electors voted with yea and only one and a half million with nay. It was a clear and convincing people's

vote for a continuance of the even, tranquil, and satisfactory course which national events had taken for so many years. It was significant that there was a majority against the Emperor and the Empire only in the two excitable departments of the Seine (Paris) and the Bouches-du-Rhone (Marseilles), and that the rural population in particular strongly pronounced for the existing *status*. To Napoleon the result of the *plébiscite* was specially gratifying. He had at that time ruled for eighteen years, and he had on the whole ruled well and wisely. Under his government France had prospered greatly; industry and commerce had expanded; labour had won a larger reward; the arts and sciences had received fostering care; his whole energies had been concentrated upon the development of the nation's material and spiritual resources, and rich fruits had been harvested in every direction. The choice of the French nation in 1852 seemed to have been abundantly justified, and in May, 1870, so far as human foresight could tell, the future of the Bonaparte dynasty was assured. In a word, the Empire seemed firmly established, and it still was peace.

Several changes were made in the Government, of which the effect was to strengthen Ollivier and the Liberal spirit. Count Daru left the Foreign Office, ostensibly on the question of the *plébiscite*. The real reason was that his views on the German question had made difficult his position side by side with Ollivier. He contended that "unity by the fusion of North and South, by what manner soever it might be brought about, even by the will of the populations, would be a disturbance of equilibrium, menacing to our security and one which we should have a right to oppose." Ollivier, on the contrary, "only disapproved of unity brought about violently, without, however, regarding it as a *casus belli*, and I did not believe that my country had a right to forbid a neighbouring nation to order its affairs as seemed to it right." When Daru went, Ollivier himself wished to take the Foreign Office, but Napoleon urged him to concentrate his attention on home affairs, and he agreed. "Ah," he reflected in later years, "if I had known what a plot was brewing!"

The vacant portfolio was offered to the Due de Gramont, then ambassador at Vienna, a nobleman of distinction, gifted with all the virtues, yet also not free from the limitations, of his class, and now a man of ripe years. Ollivier describes him as fascinating, witty, in intercourse equable and agreeable, prudent in general, given to

viewing affairs in a large way, and impatient of detail – the true type, he says, of the old French aristocrat. Other authorities describe him as quick of imagination, sometimes too quick of decision, and by nature passionate and fiery. The Earl of Malmesbury says he was "vain and impetuous." Count Beust, who knew Gramont intimately, says that "he was in truth a *preux chevalier*, and his one fault was that he was too optimistic and too readily believed in that which he wished to be true." Gramont's diplomatic experience had been rich and varied. As Napoleon's ambassador to Turin and Rome he had witnessed the shepherding of Italy into the national fold by Piedmont, and as his representative at the Court of Vienna he had lived through the events which led to the eclipse of Austria by Prussia. No man in the French diplomatic service was more in touch with the questions then vital to Central and Western Europe. Hitherto he had played no part in party life, and Napoleon regarded it as an objection to his appointment that he had never been a member of either of the Chambers.

If, however, he entered the Cabinet unbound by public acts, all the more firmly was he bound by political prejudices. His special handicap, which he shared with predecessors like Drouyn de Lhuys, Moustier, and Daru, was the idea that for Prussia to attempt to extend her influence beyond the Main would be an act of aggression to which France could not be indifferent. He regarded the relationship between the two Powers as fated to grow worse, and he had for some time spoken of war with Prussia as inevitable. Ollivier obtained his promise that he would keep his anti-Prussian bias in the background and loyally carry out the conciliatory policy of the Ministry, and he generously admits that the Duke joined him with a sincere desire and intention to work for the maintenance of peace. Nevertheless, it was not good for France that Gramont's known hostility to Prussia made him *persona gratissima* to the military and clerical parties.

On the last day of June Ollivier declared in the *Corps Législatif* that peace had never been so sure as at that time. Replying to an appeal from Thiers for the pursuance of a consistent policy of conciliation – "If we wish to promote peace," said the eloquent tribune, "we must first cultivate a love of peace and then be very strong" – the Premier affirmed: "The Government has no anxiety of any kind. At no time was the maintenance of peace more assured than now. Wherever one looks no question can be discerned which is capable of creating

danger. All the Cabinets understand the urgency of respect for treaties, and particularly of two treaties on which the peace of Europe rests, the Treaty of Paris of 1856, which secures peace for the East, and the Treaty of Prague, of 1866, which secures peace for Germany."

When in that month the War Minister introduced the army estimates for 1871, he announced a reduction of 10,000 in the levy of new men, as Count Daru had promised earlier in the year. Recalling later the Government's action, M. Blondeau, director of the administrative services at the Ministry of War, stated that when in May he asked for a certain vote the Minister made a "lively scene," and declared that "since the *plébiscite* the Government was absolutely bent on peace and there was no anticipation of war." As with the Government, so with the Emperor personally. The Earl of Malmesbury relates a conversation which he had in Paris with Napoleon on May 19th, in which the Emperor "observed that Europe appeared to be tranquil," and he comments: "It was evident to me that at that moment he had no idea of the coming hurricane which suddenly broke out in the first week of June." In Germany the outlook seemed to be no less tranquil. The States north of the Main had settled down under the new Confederation, and Prussia and Saxony in particular were applying their energies to the advancement of commerce and industry; while the States of the South, far from sympathizing with an aggressive policy, were becoming restive under the military and financial burden already imposed upon them by the alliances, and there had been debates in the Bavarian and Würtemberg Diets on the advantages of a militia as compared with a too costly standing army.

In his speech from the throne made at the opening of the North German Diet on February 14th, the King of Prussia, recalling his hopes of a year before, that "the wishes of the nations and the needs of civilization" would be met by the preservation of peace, said: "It does my heart good to be able to announce to-day that my confidence has been completely justified. Among the Governments, as among the nations of the modern world, the conviction is making triumphant progress that it is the right and duty of every political commonwealth to cultivate public welfare, liberty, and justice independently within its own borders, and that the defensive forces of every country should be used only for the protection of its own independence and not the violation of the independence of other nations." In the Prussian Lower

House just before the Radical leader, Dr. Virchow, little suspecting what had been going on behind the scenes, had proposed a measure of disarmament, on the ground that "there seldom was a time when there was so little reason for States to confront each other fully armed." The proposal was rejected, but its discussion showed that the thoughts of politicians were of peace and not of war.

In the midst of an unparalleled calm, a sudden thunderclap shook the skies. There was no immediate storm, but it was a sign that the air was charged with electricity and that a storm was not far distant.

The story of the Hohenzollern candidature for the Spanish throne and of its sequel, the Ems telegram, has been told a hundred times, yet to pass over events so genetic in a history of the war of 1870 would be like ignoring Adam and Eve in a history of mankind. For while other incidents may have been the occasion of the war, it was the candidature episode and it alone that made war possible.

After a long series of sporadic disturbances a real revolution was carried out in Spain in September, 1868, and Queen Isabella II was deposed. A limited monarchy was proclaimed, and pending the choice of a new ruler a provisional Government was formed, with Marshal Serrano as Regent and Marshal Prim as Minister of War but later as Minister-President. In the following February the Cortes were summoned to decide on the new form of government. The assembly proved to be monarchist, like the Ministry, and it was the general feeling that the monarchy should continue but with a new dynasty. The discovery of a suitable successor proved difficult. The throne was offered to the Duke of Edinburgh, but Queen Victoria and her Ministers rejected the idea. Inquiries were made and invitations issued in other directions, but with the same result, for a throne so insecure offered many risks and few attractions. Meanwhile, the republican party was active and making progress, and it soon became apparent that unless a candidate were obtained for the throne speedily there would be no throne left to fill.

Then it was that the idea of approaching a Roman Catholic Prussian Prince in the person of Prince Leopold, a son of Prince Charles Anthony of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, occurred, or was suggested, to the royalist party in Madrid. Prince Leopold had been mentioned in Madrid amongst others as an eligible candidate as early as October, 1868, and in the following February his name was

publicly advocated by the Councillor of State and deputy Don Salazar of Mazarredo. Between these dates Prince Anthony had made known his opinion that France would never assent to the elevation of a Hohenzollern to the Spanish throne, and had urged that Napoleon's assent should first be obtained. To this course Prim was opposed, and Bismarck, who already had a hand in the scheme, was of the same mind.

In March, 1869, Señor Rancès, the Spanish ambassador to Vienna, visited Berlin for several days and was repeatedly closeted with the King and with Bismarck, who had been quick to recognize the new Spanish Government. Count Benedetti, connecting this visit with the active propagandism which was being made on Prince Leopold's behalf, duly reported the episode to his Government, and was directed to seek assurances that the choice of a Hohenzollern would not be encouraged in Berlin. "The French nation," Napoleon declared, "would never tolerate it, and it must be prevented." Bismarck was away from Berlin at the time, but in his absence Herr von Thile, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, assured Benedetti on his word of honour that there had been no talk of Prince Leopold as a candidate, that there was no question, and could be no question, of such a choice, and that in his conversations with the Spanish ambassador Bismarck had discussed only the general political affairs of Spain. In April the crown was offered in turn to King Ferdinand of Portugal and Duke Amadeo of Aosta, second son of the King of Italy, and by both was refused. In his desire to divert attention from the only three States able to give to Spain a Roman Catholic Prince of suitable rank, Austria, Bavaria, and Prussia, Napoleon now favoured the recall of Isabella.

In May, however, Prince Anthony was formally sounded as to his willingness to allow his son to accept an invitation, and although he at first declined, it looked as though the contingency feared by Napoleon had come dangerously near. Once more Benedetti was instructed to let Bismarck plainly understand the Emperor's objection to the Spanish crown passing into the hands of a Prussian Prince. Bismarck answered that he had no reason to discuss the question, since the King would in any event disapprove of Prince Leopold's candidature, even if the Cortes invited it, and, moreover, both father and son were against acceptance. Encouraged to frankness by this apparent disclaimer,

Benedetti thereupon warned Bismarck that the Emperor was watching the incident with great concern, for it had for France “an interest of the first order.”

This warning was given as early as May 11, 1869, and it is of vital importance for the study of later developments, since there can be little doubt that it had a sinister effect upon Bismarck’s course of action. Recognizing with what jealousy and hostility Napoleon regarded the idea of a Hohenzollern ruler in Spain, he saw and seized, as he confessed later, the chance of quarrelling with France for which he had been waiting. Let him only succeed in playing his cards with decent skill, and he was sure that the warning would become a threat and the threat lead to actual rupture. As his secretary, Busch, commenting upon the incident, expresses it, Bismarck now” accommodated himself to the situation.”

Neither Benedetti nor Napoleon was convinced by the second disclaimer. The reply had been evasive, justifying the suspicion that there were concealed designs behind. In his report to his Government the ambassador wrote:

“If one could unconditionally believe him (Bismarck), everything would be reassuring, but judging by experience, I am disposed to believe that he has not revealed to me his real thoughts. I remarked to him, therefore, that the Prince could not comply with the wish of the Cortes without the King’s consent, so that the King would need to prescribe the terms of his decision. Bismarck admitted this, but instead of assuring me that the King was determined in all circumstances to recommend refusal, he returned to his earlier remark that owing to the dangers which would surround the new Sovereign the King would be bound to dissuade the Prince from embarking upon such an adventure. ‘Moreover,’ he added, ‘who knows whether an invitation will come at all or whether so ambitious a man as General Prim will not in the end keep the place for himself?’ He carefully avoided giving me a declaration that the King would in no case permit the Prince to accept the crown, while Thile had assured me of this on his word of honour. It appears, therefore, that Bismarck intends to reserve for the King full liberty of action in any event.”

Bismarck may honestly have doubted at that stage whether Prince Leopold would really have a chance of sitting upon the Spanish throne. What is certain – though Benedetti did not then know it – is

that he was all the time doing his utmost to further his candidature. It was a species of diplomacy in which he was a practised hand, for he had engaged in it with success only three years before (March, 1866) when he had helped to seat another son of the same Prince on the throne of Roumania, vacant likewise owing to a revolution. In that case it was the right of the Powers to choose a successor, but without giving them time to confer he had urged Prince Charles of Hohenzollern to hurry to Bucharest, not seeking the King's permission, though an officer, and there offer himself for election. The advice was followed, and the Prince was received with acclamations and duly elected on April 20th. Thereupon Bismarck had professed to the ambassadors in Berlin his painful surprise that such an improper proceeding had taken place, and had promised that Prussia would work with the other Powers in any action which they might think fit to take. The Powers duly protested, but Prince Charles was not disturbed, and though his first act had been to call for Prussian officers to instruct his army, his government had succeeded beyond expectations. The fact that the first Hohenzollern candidature had prospered may well have suggested to Bismarck a second venture of the same kind.

For a time events moved slowly in Madrid, though Bismarck's agents were working there in Prince Leopold's behalf. In the summer a new constitution was settled, and Serrano was confirmed in the regency. The restlessness of the Carlist and republican parties, however, made it necessary to find an acceptable King soon if the monarchy was to be preserved. In September, therefore, a Spanish envoy, Salazar, accompanied by Baron von Werthern, the Prussian envoy at Munich, who played an important part in the candidature drama behind the scenes, waited on Prince Anthony in Switzerland in order to repeat the invitation. Whatever his private wishes in the matter may have been, the Prince prudently showed little enthusiasm, and the only promise he would give was that he might agree to the candidature on being assured by the Spanish Government that his son's election would be acceptable not only to the Spanish nation but to the Emperor Napoleon and to the King of Prussia, as the head of the Hohenzollern house.

Overtures in other directions proving still unsuccessful, Salazar was sent to Germany on the same mission in February, 1870, bearing

letters from the Regent both to the King and Bismarck. On the way to Berlin he called on Prince Anthony at his home in Düsseldorf. It was now that the question seriously entered the sphere of Prussian politics. There is no reason to doubt that the King up to this time, and perhaps later, disapproved, or at least did not approve, of the candidature. On hearing now, for the first time, of the project which was brewing, he wrote to Bismarck on February 26th that the announcement was like "a bolt from the blue," declared that he had "not the faintest suspicion" of it, and added: "As you have received details from the Prince, we must confer on the matter, but I am absolutely against it." Having no wish to interfere in a matter so delicate, he now declined to receive the Spanish envoy. All the more cordial, however, was the reception given to Salazar by Bismarck. The result was that on March 15th a Hohenzollern family council was held on the question. Of this meeting Prince Anthony wrote at the time to his son Prince Charles of Roumania that the King presided, and there were also present "the Crown Prince, we two (Princes Anthony and his son Leopold). Bismarck, Moltke, Roon, Schleinitz, Thile, and Delbrück." Bismarck is concerned to make the point that the council had not a Ministerial character, and leaves it to be concluded that at most a dinner conversation took place. But at least the King's political advisers were well represented, and a formal decision was taken. "The council," Prince Anthony continued, "resolved unanimously in favour of acceptance, which means the performance of a patriotic Prussian duty. After a great struggle Leopold refused. As they want, above all things, in Spain a Catholic Hohenzollern, I proposed Fritz." For a time the negotiations advanced no further.

Seeing that the King still had scruples, Bismarck – now took the question more decidedly into his own hands, for he had none. In the spring of 1870 began a series of clandestine negotiations, unknown to the King, carried on between his Minister – partly through two intermediaries – and Prim. His principal agent was Lothar Bucher, a Foreign Office official, who performed much secret service for his chief, and was in later years received into his most intimate companionship, and with him was Major von Versen, an officer of the General Staff. A German historian regrets that more light has not been thrown upon these negotiations. Bucher kept his secrets well, however, and no connected story of his journeys to Madrid and his

doings there ever left his pen. Bismarck's *famulus* Busch says the "chief" sent Bucher to the Spanish capital before Easter, with an encouraging letter to Prim, while at home he was plying Prince Anthony with arguments and entreaties to persuade his son to stand. The more, in fact, the Spanish emissaries were discouraged by their efforts in Germany, the more did Bismarck urge Prim and his colleagues in Spain to persist in the Hohenzollern candidature. A gleam is thrown upon dark places by the diary of these feverish days kept by Bismarck's secretary, Abeken. Abeken's letters and notes show that formal negotiations were proceeding between the Minister and Madrid at least from the beginning of May, and that early in June telegrams were passing every day. Then by mischance the unauthorized mission appears to have leaked out, and when the King heard of it he was deeply mortified. Bismarck tried to disclaim underhand work, but the effort was not convincing. On June 20th we find him writing to Abeken, who enjoyed the royal confidence in a high degree, begging him in abject terms to do his best to pacify the King.

"I beg you to explain the following to his Majesty," he wrote. "I have never carried on any international negotiations without his Majesty's knowledge or consent, nor shall I ever do so. Bucher did not transact anything in Spain, but carried a personal message which I was obliged to give Marshal Prim in reply to a private letter and telegram, the contents of which were known to His Majesty. I did not wish to write, lest my letter should be submitted to the Spanish Parliament, and be there discussed, and I wished it to be as far as possible transmitted in such a way as not to create *by our reserve* an unpleasant impression in Spain. It could only be settled by word of mouth and was difficult to put in writing, and Bucher is one of the few men who know the circumstances and personalities on both sides of the Pyrenees. The answer only amounted to this: that the King's Government cannot undertake to bring influence to bear on the decision of the hereditary Prince, either for or against acceptance, and must therefore let Spain await the Prince's decision. That I did not write, but sent a reply through Bucher, was partly to avoid the harshness which a written answer might convey, and partly, as I said, as a precautionary measure against publicity."

So lame an apology was hardly worthy of a man of Bismarck's

resource, but its very transparency appears to have disarmed the King's resentment, for Abeken was soon able to reply that all was again as before. There is no doubt that for once in a way Bismarck had a very bad conscience, not because he had done wrong, but because he had been found out. Only on that supposition is the pique revealed by the closing sentences of the letter comprehensible: "I have withdrawn from the affair, and do not wish to have anything more to do with it. It has caused me work and vexation enough." Perhaps never in the course of his public career, before or after, did Bismarck compromise himself more completely, though he attained his end. Bearing these facts in mind, it is difficult to understand Bismarck's statement to Count Bernstorff at a later date (July 18th) that he "was casually informed in confidence of the Spanish offer by a private person concerned in the negotiations," unless, indeed, the private person was Bucher, his agent.

Nearly two years before, Lord Clarendon, whose political acumen was rated highly in Berlin, had warned the King and Moltke in conversation of the danger of any action which might provoke France, assuring them that if a challenge were offered to him Napoleon would be compelled by the force of military and public opinion to accept it, and that for his own safety he would make war. How Bismarck used this warning – for it cannot have failed to reach his ears – is told by Busch. "Bismarck's plan," he writes of the candidature scheme at this stage, after admitting it to have been a ruse to entrap the French, "had succeeded, unless in the eleventh hour a new impediment should prevent the trap from shutting, i.e. unless the King, owing to his indecisive manner, failed him and allowed the favourable moment to slip by."

But the King, however much he may have been displeased by the underhand manner in which his Minister had been acting, no longer objected to the candidature itself, and he must have given his formal consent before June 22nd, since on that date Abeken, who was with him at Ems, wrote: "The King is satisfied that the hereditary Prince will be acceptable to the Spanish army owing to his having fought in the campaign of 1866." To the threadbare pretence, to which even Sybel gives the support of his authority, that the candidature was a private matter between the Prince and his suitors, another German historian, Hans Delbrück, gives the sufficient answer: "It is certain that

no Hohenzollern Prince would have taken such a resolution without carefully inquiring into and taking full account of the royal wishes."

Efforts were to be made to keep the matter quiet for a time, but the fateful choice soon became known. Asked by Prim on July 2nd how the Emperor would receive it, the French ambassador in Madrid answered that the Spanish Government could not have taken a graver step, since it was for Napoleon a humiliation and for the French nation a challenge. Prim excused himself and his Government by the plea that they had been driven to the Hohenzollern as a last resort. The crown had gone abegging long enough, and it was high time to come to a decision. "If we had not seized this opportunity," he said, "it is certain that we should have had either Montpensier or the republic, which I hate like hell." Two days later the Council of Ministers officially adopted the Prince as their candidate, and the formal election was fixed for July 20th.

The candidature proposal, as the Empress Eugénie said at the time, "exploded like a bomb, without warning." So carefully had the secret been kept to the last, that even the Spanish ambassador in Paris, Don Sallustio Olozaga, had been unaware of the plot until the Duc de Gramont told him of it on July 4th. The day before the Minister had already telegraphed to the *chargé d'affaires* in Berlin (Benedetti was at Wildbad) expressing the "hope that the Prussian Government was foreign to this intrigue," but directing him to intimate to the Foreign Minister that the "regrettable incident" had created a bad impression in France. To the British ambassador in Paris he had declared at once that rather than see a Hohenzollern upon the throne of Spain he would have France fight both that country and Prussia.

Bismarck was absent from the capital, but his deputy at the Foreign Office, Herr von Thile, the same who was at the council of March 15th, assured the French *chargé d'affaires* that he knew nothing, and that the Government knew nothing, of the incident, which "did not exist for them." Writing of this disclaimer, Bismarck says in his Recollections: "The first demands of the French respecting the candidature . . . had been presented on July 4th, and answered by our Foreign Office evasively, though in accordance with the truth – that the *Ministry* (Bismarck italicizes the word) knew nothing about the matter." It was the common fiction of social life translated into diplomatic intercourse: "Madame is not at home," while all the time

madame is looking out of the window. Of course the Ministry knew nothing, for the head of the Ministry had not yet formally taken his colleagues into his confidence.

Events of epoch-making moment were in hurried progress, yet so little did the British Foreign Office or its intelligence departments know of or appreciate them, even now, that Lord Granville, who had become Foreign Secretary on Lord Clarendon's death at the end of June, was welcomed by a permanent Under-Secretary on July 5th with the extraordinary assurance that he had never known "so great a lull in foreign affairs," and that "the aspect of Europe was unusually peaceful." Yet upon this very day the British Minister at Madrid, Mr. Layard, telegraphed to Lord Granville the Spanish Cabinet's fateful decision.

France may have exaggerated the danger of a plot which would have put a Prussian Prince, a relative of the Sovereign, upon the throne of a neighbouring State, whose friendship was necessary to her own safety, though of that she was entitled to judge for herself. Nevertheless, that the candidature was mainly promoted on the Prussian side from political reasons cannot be doubted. Prince Anthony wrote at this time: " Bismarck wishes acceptance from dynastic and political motives, but the King only wishes it if Leopold desires it of his own free will." Whatever the King may have thought, his Minister certainly had very definite ideas of the advantages to be derived from the presence of a Prussian officer upon the throne of Spain. Busch, who knew his patron inside and out, records that Bismarck hoped by this move to make certain of having in the rear of France a friendly State, which, when the inevitable clash came, would "compel France to leave part of her forces behind to cover the uncertain neighbour in the Southwest." Such a calculation was entirely in the spirit of Bismarck's policy towards France. Already he had made sure of Russia in the East; he had for several years been busily cultivating the friendship of Austria and Italy in the South, as events proved with consequences disappointing to France; and he was at this moment angling for an ally in British waters. Let Spain be secured, and France would be effectively isolated. The policy of "encirclement," later the cause of so much controversy, had thus been introduced in European politics before the German Empire was established.

In the meantime, Bismarck had set to work the sedulous Busch, who at his inspiration was carrying on a busy Press campaign, of which the object was to convince the country and Europe that France and not Prussia was really at the bottom of the Hohenzollern candidature. The story was even circulated in the newspapers that the French Government had been "aware of the candidature of the Prince of Hohenzollern for months past, that they carefully promoted it, and foolishly imagined that it would serve as a means of isolating Prussia and creating a division in Germany."

Already Paris, always nervous and overstrung, had lashed herself into fury over the deception perpetrated by the truculent Prussian, and the demand was addressed to the Government from all sides that it should require from Berlin the prompt disclaimer of a proceeding which was at once an insult and a danger to France. "*Un échec*," M. Ollivier had said to Lord Lyons in January, "*c'est la guerre!*" Little did French statesmen know how completely they had fallen into the very mood favourable to Bismarck's designs. And now, in a situation which called for the exercise of the greatest caution and circumspection, the Duc de Gramont impetuously blundered into a course of action which placed him at the mercy of his far nimbler and more calculating antagonist. Instead of keeping the question in the channels of diplomacy, he at once took it to the tribune, and instead of appealing to reason he adopted the surest means of stirring up passion.

On July 5th a Council of Ministers, meeting under the presidency of the Emperor, adopted a manifesto, which was read in the *Corps Législatif* on the following day. The Duc de Gramont enjoys the credit of having drafted this document, though Ollivier claims to have given definiteness and vigour to its final form. After an appeal to the good-will of the Spanish Parliament and people, towards whom France had ever shown a friendly disposition, the declaration added:

"We do not believe that respect for the rights of a neighbouring people requires us to tolerate that a foreign Power, in placing one of its Princes on the throne of Charles V, shall disturb to our prejudice the existing equilibrium in Europe, and imperil the interests and the honour of France. We firmly hope that that eventuality will not arise. In order to prevent it we count at once on the wisdom of the German people and the friendship of the Spanish people." Had the Duke stopped there, it is possible that no harm would have been done.

There occurred at this point, however, one of those tempting ejaculations which so often decoy impetuous orators from the path of discretion. For M. G. de Cassagnac now cried out: “And upon our resolution!” Thereupon the Duke continued, as if taking his cue from the suggestion conveyed in these words:

“If it were otherwise, strong in your support, gentlemen, and that of the nation (’It would not fail you,’ cried another encouraging voice), we should know how to do our duty without hesitation and without weakness.”

So unlike in temper were these words to those which had preceded, that it seems incredible that they formed part of the considered statement. The theory is hazarded that Gramont went beyond his brief, and that the closing menace was a disastrous *impromptu*, suggested by the inflammatory interruptions noted, a response to the psychic influences which surged upon the speaker and for the moment unbalanced his judgment. Salvoes of applause followed the defiant declaration, which reflected so faithfully the mind and temper of the Chamber, of Paris, if not of France. It was in relation to this utterance that Bismarck coined that wise little maxim, “If you want to make a bargain, never threaten.” For the speech which elated Paris created corresponding feelings of resentment and anger in Berlin, and made more difficult the diplomatic negotiations which should rather have preceded than followed it.

Perhaps the whole history of constitutional government contains no more lamentable instance of a representative Executive allowing itself to be driven headlong into warlike measures by frantic incitements from the tribune and the street. Writing at a later date, every leading actor in the sorry tragedy – Gramont, Ollivier, Thiers, Benedetti – admitted that Paris for the time went out of her mind. The newspapers did their best to inflame public opinion. With few exceptions they vehemently begged the Government not to moderate its attitude, for only on that condition would an undivided nation be behind it. “The Caudine forks are ready for the Prussians,” wrote the *Pays*. “They will have to stoop and pass beneath them vanquished and disarmed if they do not dare to enter the struggle, the issue of which is not doubtful. Our war-cry has as yet elicited no reply. The echoes of the German Rhine are still dumb. If Prussia had used the language spoken by France, we should have been on the march long ago.”

The British Government all the time was urging moderation, convinced that France was in the wrong and was putting herself more in the wrong every day. Now, at the Emperor's suggestion, it agreed to use its influence with Berlin, with a view to the simple withdrawal by the Prince of Hohenzollern of his candidature. That seemed the obvious solution of the difficulty, and at this stage the Duc de Gramont asked and wanted no more. The effort was made, but the threat of July 6th rankled in Bismarck's mind, and it was not received with cordiality.

Hitherto not only English opinion but European opinion generally had been decidedly against the choice of the Spanish Cortes, and the Governments of most of the Great Powers were earnestly advising Prussia to show regard for French susceptibilities. At the same time no one defended the Duc de Gramont's rash outburst. Even Count Beust wrote to the Austrian ambassador in Paris on July 11th:

"It is said that France is not the aggressor, and that unless Prussia withdraws the Hohenzollern candidature she will be guilty of provoking war. Let me speak quite frankly. If war should be inevitable, it will be due above all to the attitude assumed by France from the very inception of the difficulty. Her first announcements do not in the least partake of a diplomatic character, but practically constitute a declaration of war against Prussia, couched in terms that have aroused amazement throughout Europe and have justified the conviction that she had made up her mind beforehand to have war at any price."

All this time the Chancellery of Berlin had remained silent, awaiting developments. Events had been set in motion, and it remained to be seen whereto they would grow, and to act accordingly. It was the height of the parliamentary recess, the time of villeggiatura, and the capital was empty. The King was recruiting his health at Ems, whither he had gone on June 20th; Bismarck was nursing his nerves at Varzin, the ancestral Tusculum; the rest of the Ministers were at the sea or in the mountains. The time had been singularly opportune for the development of a conspiracy whose success from the Prussian standpoint depended largely upon the creation of the impression that the Government knew nothing about it. After the Duc de Gramont's statement in the *Corps Législatif*, Bismarck had, indeed, written to the German ambassadors in Europe disowning on the part of his

Government any responsibility for or knowledge of the candidature negotiations, protesting against the Duke's attack as closing the door to a friendly discussion of the question, and giving due warning that Germany would be prepared to meet any attack from France.

In the meantime French public opinion was more and more being swept into the dangerous swirl of passion, inflamed by injured pride and wounded sensibilities, yet totally unable to recognize that any corresponding sentiment could exist in Germany. Benedetti was still at Wildbad, and there the Due de Gramont telegraphed on July 7th, directing him to go to Ems, in order to enter into personal relationships with the King. As the temper of the nation, and especially of Paris, had risen, the Duke's conditions had become harder. "The only thing that will satisfy us and prevent war," he now wrote, "is that the royal Government shall disapprove of the candidature of the Prince and require its withdrawal. The matter is urgent, for in the event of an unsatisfactory answer we must anticipate our opponent and begin the movement of troops to-morrow. Should you succeed in persuading the King to revoke his approval of the candidature, it will be an enormous success. If not, it would be war. . . . Therefore, no circumlocution, and no delays! No mission was more important; that you may succeed is my most ardent wish." In a postscript the Duke warned Benedetti against being satisfied with a mere promise that the King would abandon the Prince to his fate and be neutral whatever happened; he must be required to "put right the situation which he had helped to create." Even now, however, the most that the Duke asked was the revocation by the King of his approval.

The King gave Benedetti an audience on July 9th, and after he had protested against the terms and tone of Gramont's declaration in the French Chamber he discussed the question with him affably. He said that he had acted in the matter not as King but as head of his family, so that the candidature was not to be regarded as an affair of State. Benedetti was unable to understand how a Sovereign could thus divide his personality into two parts, nor was the claim compatible with the fact that the King was the head of the Hohenzollern family in virtue of his sovereignty and that his chief Minister and generals had been required to attend the conference at which his approval of the candidature had been given. Nevertheless, while insisting that the

Prince had accepted the candidature on his own responsibility, and that he himself had not been in a position to forbid it, the King gave the ambassador reason to that if in view of the irritation which had been caused in France the Prince and his father, with whom he was even then in communication, were disposed to withdraw, he would approve their decision. He added that he was expecting word from them any hour, and would communicate with Benedetti as soon as it arrived.

Benedetti concluded from this reply that the King was favourable to renunciation, but that he preferred that the Prince should take the initiative, and so he reported to his Government. Elated by this partial success, the Due de Gramont advanced his claims still further. "Write me a telegram," he telegraphed to Benedetti next day, "that I can read to the Chamber or publish, in which you will show that the King has known and authorized the acceptance by the Prince of Hohenzollern, and say above all that he has asked that he may confer with the Prince before communicating to you his decision." "If the King is not willing to advise the Prince of Hohenzollern to renounce," the Duke wrote to the ambassador on the same date, "well, it will be war at once, and in a few days we shall be at the Rhine."

Benedetti had a second audience of the King on July 11th, in which he begged him to allay public feeling in France by formally enjoining his relative to withdraw. The King answered that a reply might be expected in twenty-four hours, and if, as was possible, it notified the Prince's withdrawal, he would assent to it. From this statement the Duc de Gramont drew the safe conclusion that the King already knew of the intended renunciation, but that he wished it to be published independently by the Prince, so that he himself might not seem to be capitulating to French pressure. But such a capitulation was exactly what the Duke wanted, and was now determined to have; the renunciation was not only to be complete, but it was to bear the royal seal. Hence on learning the same day how matters stood, he at once instructed Benedetti to "employ all his skill" to obtain from the King himself, without intermediaries, "the satisfaction necessary to soothe the Chambers and public opinion."

That the King was anxious for the abandonment with honour of a scheme which he now saw was fraught with grave danger cannot be doubted. He had written to the Queen on July 7th: "*Entre nous soit dit,*

I would be altogether pleased if Leopold were not elected"; and four days later, when the situation had become critical, he wrote to the same: "My cousin is much impressed by the turn things are taking in Paris, but he thinks that I am the one who ought to break off the affair. I have replied that I could do nothing about it, but that I would approve a rupture on his part with joy," adding: "God grant that the Hohenzollern may have understanding!"

In the forenoon of July 12th Prince Anthony sent a telegram to Marshal Prim in Madrid and to the Spanish ambassador in Paris, Sefior Olozaga, renouncing the candidature on his son's behalf. Europe breathed freely once more when the good news became known, and for the moment the relief was nowhere greater than in Ministerial circles in Paris. All the more reputable of the newspapers seemed likewise to be pacified. "The candidature of a German Prince for the throne of Spain is set aside and the peace of Europe will not be disturbed," said the *Constitutionnel*, a journal inspired by the Minister of Justice. "We are satisfied. We did not ask more, and it is with pride that we welcome this pacific solution. It is a great victory, which has not cost a tear or a drop of blood."

So thought most members of the Government, and so thought Napoleon himself. Ollivier in particular was elated. "He hastened to M. Thiers on reaching the Chamber," writes Jules Simon. "You were right: we have succeeded. It is peace!" "Now," said M. Thiers to him, "you must keep quiet." "Be at ease," he replied; "we have peace, and we will see that it is not disturbed." In contrast to Ollivier's statesmanlike restraint was the rashness of the deputy who in that critical moment called for "guarantees for the future" – sinister words to fall upon the ears of the Prussia-hating Foreign Secretary. Even in excitable Paris the first feeling was one of satisfaction that the threatened war-clouds seemed to have rolled away, and had that feeling been encouraged in high places it is possible that in a few days France might have forgotten the incident and resumed her normal life.

It was now that the Due de Gramont put the crown to an accumulation of indiscretion. Since the idea that Prussia must be humiliated had gained entire possession of him, he turned every conciliatory act done by the King into a pretext for further pressure, forgetting, as Bismarck himself was soon to forget in turn, that the honour of one country is just as precious as that of another. On the

12th the Duke committed two acts of supreme folly. First he persuaded the Prussian ambassador in Paris, Baron von Werther, to write to his King asking him to send an apologetic letter to the Emperor, containing an assurance that he had never intended to offend him or France, and later in the day he obtained the Emperor's permission, after a severe struggle, to the despatch of a telegram to Benedetti directing him to seek from the King a formal assurance that he would not approve of his relative's candidature at any future time. In thus reopening the dispute after it had seemed to have been so happily settled the French Government alienated the last remnant of sympathy felt for it in neutral countries. Lord Lyons, who had all the time been offering the conciliatory offices of his Government, did not hesitate to tell the Due de Gramont that this new demand was a provocative challenge which would turn against France the public opinion of the whole world.

Benedetti discharged his mission at Ems punctiliously and loyally. Walking on the river promenade in the forenoon of the 13th, he found himself unexpectedly in the presence of the King, who was accompanied by an adjutant. The King greeted him with the words, "The courier from Sigmaringen has not arrived, but here is good news," and he produced a Cologne newspaper containing the news of the renunciation. Benedetti replied that he knew the news already, and proceeded to ask for a guarantee against any future candidature. He has said that he was prepared for the answer which came. "You ask me," said the King, "to undertake an obligation to hold good for all time and all circumstances. Such an undertaking I cannot and dare not give. I must reserve liberty to decide in every case according to circumstances. Certainly I cherish no secret plans, and the matter has given me so much annoyance that I can only wish it settled irrevocably. Nevertheless, it is impossible to go as far as you wish."

After repeating his request with the same result, the Count withdrew. The King had felt humiliated by the pressure put upon him, and his humiliation was increased when a little later Werther arrived from Paris bringing Gramont's demand for a letter of apology. The two affronts decided the King not to receive Benedetti again, though twice during the afternoon a further interview was sought. Nevertheless, he sent word by an adjutant that he approved of his relative's withdrawal, and asked that this approval might be signified to his

Government.

All the spirits of mischief and perversity seemed to be ministering to the Due de Gramont during that July day as he floundered forward in the wrong way once taken and now no longer to be retraced. The King of Prussia's acceptance of the renunciation was emphatic: yet no less emphatic was his refusal to bind himself for all time. Further pressure from France could only be irritating as well as useless, for nothing is more offensive to a man of spirit than the suggestion that he does not mean what he says. Nevertheless, Gramont again telegraphed instructions to Benedetti in the evening of the 13th to "make a last attempt." "Tell the King," he said, "that we limit ourselves to asking him to forbid the Prince of Hohenzollern to go back on his renunciation. Let him but say, ' I will forbid him!' and authorize you to write me to that effect or charge his Minister to do it, and we shall be satisfied." In the existing circumstances such suggestions belonged to the sphere, not of diplomacy but of frivolity. But the voices of passion and rancour were egging on the luckless Minister M. Paul de Cassagnac had only that day dared him to retrace his steps, warning him that if he did "the Ministry of War would henceforth be a Ministry of Shame," and the taunt stung and smarted. Benedetti discreetly made no further attempt to see the King, but conveyed his message through a Minister-in- waiting, with the negative result which he expected. From the moment that the King had refused the ambassador further discourse, the negotiations passed from Ems to Berlin, from the hands of the King to those of his Iron Chancellor. Bismarck had already asked for permission to wait upon the King, and had received orders to do so. On the 12th he had arrived in Berlin from Varzin, there to break the journey, ill in body and mind, indignant at the insults which the French Government and its diplomacy had heaped upon Prussia during the last few days, and tortured by the thought that if the King were left to himself he might capitulate to pressure and take the issue of war or peace into his own hands. And already Bismarck had determined that there should be war. Before this Werther had reported to him his promise to be the bearer of Napoleon's wish for a letter of apology, and he had angrily ordered him to quit the Paris embassy "on plea of indisposition." The ambassador's act had undoubtedly been gravely indiscreet, for the proper channels for any message of the kind were the French embassy

and the Foreign Office in Berlin.

His disappointment was intensified when during dinner, at which both Moltke, Chief of the General Staff, and Roon, the Minister of War, were present, a further telegram arrived notifying the renunciation of the candidature. It seemed as though his deeply laid and carefully nurtured schemes had been frustrated at the moment of apparent success, and, wrathful at the King's weakness, he determined definitely to lay down office and return to Varzin, because "after all the insolent challenges which had gone before I perceived in this extorted submission a humiliation of Germany for which I did not desire to be responsible." Accordingly, he delayed his further journey to Ems, and sent Count Eulenburg there instead, with instructions to state his views to the King. For Bismarck the ensuing night was one of sleeplessness. Next evening the three colleagues met again at dinner – a depressed and dismal company. While they were at table a cipher telegram came from the faithful Abeken at Ems reporting on the reception of Benedetti and the King's reply.

"Count Benedetti," the message said, in the King's words, "accosted me on the promenade in order to demand of me – in the end in a very obtrusive manner – that I should authorize him to telegraph immediately that I pledged myself for all time never again to give my consent should the Hohenzollerns renew their candidature. I repelled him at last, somewhat severely, since one cannot undertake such engagements *à tout jamais*. Naturally, I told him that I had received no news as yet, and that, as he had been earlier informed than I by way of Paris and Madrid, he would see that my Government had again had no hand in it."

Thus far the King's own words. Abeken added on his own account that the substance of Prince Anthony's letter of renunciation had been communicated to Benedetti, but that the King had declined to receive him further. Finally the King asked whether the new French demand and its rejection should not be communicated to the Press – a point left to Bismarck's discretion. It was a temperate report of an annoying incident, written without malice, or any suspicion that it would or could be turned to mischievous use.

The three associates ground their teeth as they reflected that the King had twice in the same day been exposed to insult, and their resentment was aggravated by the thought that neither insult had

been repelled with the right vigour. It was clear to Bismarck that Abeken's mild story could not be published as it stood. There was, however, an alternative – to give the substance, but in more telling, more vivacious, more truculent form. That is what was done, and the result exceeded Bismarck's expectations. Sybel says it is puerile to pretend that the Ems telegram was forged. Strictly speaking, there was no forgery and no falsification, only a manipulation of the words and a perversion of their spirit. What Bismarck, nevertheless, did was so to alter the tone of the despatch as to make innocent language offensive, with the intention of producing a provocative effect upon the French nation.

As to the fact of perversion, the two versions speak for themselves; as to the motive, we have his own admission repeated and gloated over time after time, and finally enshrined in his Reflections and Reminiscences. In quieter days Bismarck often told with glee how this witches' cauldron of mischief was brewed. This is the story as taken down from his lips by the adoring Busch: "I told Roon and Moltke how matters stood. Roon was beside himself and so was Moltke; he at once looked old and ill. I asked Moltke whether we were in good form for such a war. He answered that in all human probability we might hope to win. Then, without altering a word, I made twenty words out of two hundred, and read it to them. They said it would have the right effect in that form. 'Before it sounded like a retreat (*chamade*), now it is like a challenge' (*fanfare*). Moltke was all at once young and fresh as before. Now he had his war – his business." Bismarck related at another time how the man whose business was war added: "Let me only lead our army in this campaign, and the devil may then take this pack of bones" (striking his breast). The historian Lorenz speaks of the "delightful story" of this table-talk of the three paladins of the Empire. Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that the jesting, such as it was, sent a quarter of a million Germans and Frenchmen to their deaths.

As despatched, the revised telegram ran as follows:

"After the news of the renunciation (of his candidature) by the Prince of Hohenzollern had been officially announced by the Spanish ambassador to the French Government, the French ambassador in Ems demanded of his Majesty the King that he should authorize him to telegraph to Paris that he pledged himself for all future time never again to give his sanction should the Hohenzollerns return to their

candidature. His Majesty thereupon refused to receive the ambassador again, and caused his adjutant in attendance to inform him that his Majesty had no further communication to make to him."

It will be seen that the facts were exactly as stated in Abeken's telegram, but the impression created was altogether different. Whatever he may have felt, the King did not suggest that he had either offered or designed an affront to Benedetti. According to Benedetti there was "*ni insulteur ni insulté,*" and when the ambassador left Ems on the following day the King bade him a friendly farewell Yet the impression given and intended by the altered despatch was that the King had deliberately snubbed the ambassador, and France through him, and had virtually broken off diplomatic intercourse.

Benedetti has been roundly blamed by his own people for his share in the Ems episode, and Ollivier so far inculpates his Ministry, and above all himself, as to find fault with him for not having objected to the demand for guarantees. Never was blame less deserved. It is always difficult to do a bad thing well. Benedetti did his best to fulfil a thankless task, and the failure which resulted was not his, but that of the blundering policy which he endeavoured to carry out from a sense of duty, yet against his better judgment. Gramont charged him at the time with vanity and conceit. "When he looks upon himself he is dazzled," he said. That may have been true, but therein Benedetti was not unique. Incompetent he was not. Ollivier, with all his reservations, has justly said of him: "Harassed by public opinion and by his own anxieties, we spurted him on, urged him to greater energy, and he was wise enough to withstand our impatience and not to endanger by any imprudent step the object lie was pursuing." Benedetti was, indeed, wiser on this occasion than the men whose fatuous conduct it was his business to support, though he never endorsed it. In doing this he had for a fortnight, as Ollivier hints, lived a veritable dog's life. In later years he declared that in his opinion the guarantees which he was bidden imperiously to demand at Ems were unnecessary and "conducted us fatally to war." Few impartial critics will disagree, though they will add the saving clause that if France plunged into war Prussia wanted it.

Even if the objective circumstances of the episode of the perverted telegram left any doubt as to Bismarck 's sinister intentions, such doubt would not stand against the damning fact that in giving to the

words a mordant and inflammatory turn he had the excitable populace of Paris in mind. “If the telegram is sent off to our embassies at eleven o’clock,” he said, “it will still be announced in Paris by midnight, and . . . will have the effect of a red rag upon the Gallic bull.” The effect, both in Paris and Berlin , was what Bismarck desired – in Paris embitterment and fury at Teutonic truculence, in Berlin jubilation and relief that the insult of July 6th had been avenged. “In the streets,” says Sybel of the scenes in the Prussian capital next day, “the excited masses swayed to and fro; men embraced one another amid tears of joy, thunderous cheers for King William rent the air.”

Events moved fast in those fateful hours. The whole quarrel had developed in a fortnight; it had come to a head in less than a week, and the twenty-four hours following the Ems interview had brought war in sight. Just a week before the *Duc de Gramont* had said to Lord Lyons that “The voluntary renunciation by the Prince would be a very happy solution of a difficult and complicated situation.” Not only had the Prince withdrawn, but the King had approved his act, yet the Duke was not satisfied. How had the problem altered, that a solution which then would have been “very happy” was now no solution at all? It was not the problem, but the Paris populace, that had changed. Before Paris had craved only for Prussia’s humiliation; now even that was not enough.

The die had not yet been cast, however, and it lay in the French Government’s hand. If the Emperor and his Ministers had been prepared to accept their rebuff, all might still have been well. Had they even taken the elementary precaution of obtaining from Benedetti an independent account of the Ems interview before acting upon Bismarck ‘s offensive version, a rejoinder might have been possible which would have saved their honour and preserved the peace; but the ambassador was not at that stage questioned as to what had actually occurred. A Council of State was held early on the 14th, Napoleon presiding. The Foreign Secretary professed to believe that peace would even yet be maintained, and though the Minister of War, Lebœuf, wished to call out the reserves, he was outvoted. No sooner was the meeting over than Baron von Werther waited on Gramont to report that his unlucky mission to the King had drawn upon him Bismarck’s reproof and that he had been suspended. The incident showed that in Germany, too, the signals pointed ominously to

danger. At noon the Ministers met again, with the war clamour of the Paris populace ringing in their ears. Lebœuf repeated his demand for mobilization, and on his assurance that Prussia had set the example he had his way.

Already Napoleon had recalled his old panacea for the woes of Europe, a conference of the Powers, but the idea had not found favour. Now it was revived, and a majority of the Ministers clutched at this straw of hope , a reference being drawn up on the spot. The order for mobilization was for the time countermanded. Then came the disconcerting news that Bismarck had notified the Ems episode to the foreign Courts in a way insulting to the honour of France. Council followed council; in the Chamber and in Paris the war-fever increased; even the peace-loving Ollivier was caught up by the waves of passion and flung into eddies too strong for all but the stoutest swimmers. All this time the British Foreign Secretary was making, through the ambassadors in London, Paris, and Berlin, earnest efforts to find a solution for what was at bottom a problem of national pride and honour – the most simple yet most difficult of all political problems – and so to keep the peace.

At the final council held at St. Cloud in the forenoon of the 15th both the Emperor and the Empress were present, and if of all the war-seekers the Empress was the most impetuous, the fact must be laid in good part to the account of her proud Spanish blood. The Emperor's assent was hesitant and unconvinced, yet it was given. There was excuse for him; he had for a long time been ill, and his will-power was undermined by suffering; no longer master of himself, he allowed himself to be overborne and carried away on the crest of a wave of passion. A few days later he wrote to Queen Sophie of Holland: "I did not want this war. I have been forced into it by public opinion," words almost identical with those spoken to Bismarck two months later on the battlefield.

Weighing against each other the factors of unrest and tranquillity in the political situation in France under the new Government, Lord Lyons had written to the British Foreign Secretary on May 6th, before the candidature question was sprung upon Europe: "There is more security against a sudden surprise than there was under the personal Government, but there is also less probability that the Emperor's health and personal views will prevent war." It was not the only time

or occasion that the prescience of this acute observer was justified by the event.

In the light of the facts and admissions related above it is not difficult to assign to the chief actors in the two incidents, the candidature and the telegram, their relative responsibility. The *Duc de Gramont*'s diplomatic handling of a situation which from the first was critical disclosed a sequence of blunders as egregious and wrong-headed as were ever perpetrated in the name of statesmanship, culminating in the crime of surrendering whatever remained to him of judgment and sanity to the clamour of an excited populace. In his memorials of the disaster of 1870 Gramont speaks speciously of the course which events might have taken if this thing had been done and that thing had been left undone; yet no less than Ollivier and Bene detti he has to admit that the Cabinet in the end allowed itself to be led into war at the dictation of passions which it was its duty to have controlled.

Great as was the responsibility of the French Ministers, however, far greater was that of the Prussian statesman who, toiling long and stealthily in secret workshops, had forged a chain of events which closed around France like a destiny and placed her at last in such a position that she was in effect compelled to seal her own doom. The President of the *Corps Législatif*, in his address to Napoleon on July 22nd, used with greater justification than he knew at the time the words of Montesquieu: "The real author of a war is not he who declares it, but he who makes it necessary."

In later years Bismarck was wont to say that the war with France, following one with Austria, "lay in the logic of history." All Bismarck's three wars, indeed, though claimed at the time of their occurrence to be acts of his free will, became in quieter days inevitable, events that were, in his favourite phrase, "in the nature of things." But events only become inevitable because definite causes lead to definite results, and when we speak of the "nature of things" we really mean the nature of the men who govern things and direct events into the channel of deliberate purpose and calculated design.

Bismarck has put on record the reasons which led him to provoke the third and bloodiest of his wars, and it is not necessary to go behind them. "In view of the attitude of France," he wrote at the close of his life, "our national sense of honour compelled us, in my opinion,

to go to war, and if we did not act according to the demands of this feeling we should lose, when on the way to the completion of our national development, the entire impetus gained in 1866, while the German national feeling south of the Main, aroused by our military successes in 1866 and shown by the readiness of the Southern States to enter the alliances, would grow cold again." "I was convinced," he says again, "that the gulf which had been created in the course of history between the South and the North of the fatherland by variety of dynastic and racial sentiments and modes of life, could not be more effectively bridged than by a common national war against the neighbouring nation, our aggressor for centuries." Nowhere is the intrigue by which France was lured into this disaster avowed with colder cynicism than in Busch's recital of Bismarck's table-talk on the subject. He tells how after Austria's defeat Bismarck for a long time took care to humour Napoleon, but only because of uncertainty as to the military strength of France and the readiness of the Southern States to co-operate heartily with Prussia in the event of a struggle. Directly he became satisfied that Prussia had nothing to fear, all scruple vanished. Then his attitude became one of irritation and provocation. He made it his business no longer to stave off war, but so to work on events that it should become inevitable, and above all to see that it was brought about in such a manner that France, while forced to accept Prussia's challenge, would appear to be compromised in the eyes of Europe. Only Busch himself can do justice to the final chapter of this conspiracy.

"Hitherto," he writes, "there was hope in delay, but now there was danger, so that the German statesman was compelled to exchange a policy of postponing decision for one of accelerating the inevitable, and to find a practicable way by which the French, wishful for war but not quite prepared for it, might be so acted upon that they would lay aside reserve, which had been observed by both Governments up to this point, rattle the sword, and issue a challenge, without any previous insult or other urgent occasion being apparent to the rest of Europe. In other words, it was necessary to find the drop needed to make the boiling kettle in Paris overflow; to speak frankly, the French had to be incited, and their foolish fury made it possible to do this in such a way that to the neutral Powers they appeared to be frivolous disturbers of the peace. The foresight and the art capable of

constructing and setting such a trap effectively, and finding the best bait for the jealous and haughty Gallic cock, existed in the Wilhelmstrasse at Berlin."

Busch repeats a conversation in which Bismarck is made to say that "in 1867 he avoided war because he did not judge Germany to be strong enough. In 1870 that difficulty was dispelled; Germany was now sufficiently armed."

THE WAR WITH FRANCE, 1870-1871

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THE, FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAVING decided on war, all that remained was to justify it to the nation and to Europe, and to wage it with resolution. A manifesto was issued on July 15th in which the events of the preceding fortnight were reviewed and the actions of the Ministry defended in the name of national honour. It ended with the protestation by which, in one form or other, every war between civilized nations has been justified by every combatant: "We have done everything in order to avert war. We now prepare to meet the struggle which has been forced upon us, leaving every one to bear his due share of responsibility." The declaration was read in the Senate by the Duc de Gramont and in the House of Deputies by Ollivier, who added the now historical words: "We have taken upon ourselves a great responsibility, but we accept it with a light heart." All political parties were almost solidly behind the Government. Thiers declared that the Chamber was going to war "*sur une question de susceptibilité*," and that torrents of blood were about to be shed upon a matter of form, but his warning was unheeded. The demand for credits was voted by 285 against 6. With the majority voted Gambetta, Jules Simon, and Jules Ferry, and with the minority Jules Grévy; Thiers did not vote, and Favre was absent. "How was the war received?" asks Benedetti in his memorials of those days, and he admits "With transports of enthusiasm: to deny this would be to ignore a conspicuous truth." In the first frenzy of elation public opinion in Paris insisted that it had driven the Government into hostilities against its will, and the Press declared proudly that this was not the Emperor's or his Ministers' war, but the war of the nation. It was certainly the war of that part of the nation which had for the time gained ascendancy. Though Paris, however, received the call to arms with jubilation, Paris did not faithfully represent France. This was proved by the results of an inquiry made of the prefects, for these showed that opinion in the provinces was greatly divided; only sixteen departments were reported to be warmly in favour of war, thirty-four were as decidedly opposed to it, while thirty-seven were of two minds.

In Germany the war enthusiasm was quite as outspoken, but it was far more real, and the determination to wage it successfully more conscious and more confident. If the cry of Paris was "To Berlin!" that of Berlin was "To the Rhine!" For the third time in six years the stern message "Mobilize!" ran through Prussia, and for the second time

within four years the entire German nation was put upon a war footing.

In the northern kingdom the patriotic fervour called forth was not free from arrogance, and behind it was a hatred of France which was perhaps at least as strong as love of Germany, but of the resolution og the great mass of the people there would be no doubt. In the South feeling was less inflamed, yet there, too, it was generally recognized that this was truly a German and not a Prussian quarrel, and that no German State dare stand aside. Writing to the Queen on July 13th, to tell how the Ministers-President of Bavaria and Würtemberg had declared that "if Prussia were attacked all Germany would rise as one man," King William added incredulously: "That is very fine (brav) – if only it happens!" Nevertheless, it did happen, for at the call of the blood there was no longer North and South, but one country, no longer a medley of jealous tribes, but a united nation.

Bismarck had in the previous June warned Prince Hohenlohe, the Bavarian Minister-President, that a breach of the military alliance with Prussia in the event of war with France would be for his country suicidal, since a current of public feeling would result which might lead to its partition between North Germany and Austria. The warning proved unnecessary. Both in Bavaria and Würtemberg, indeed, there were factions which hoped that these States might be able to maintain an attitude of armed neutrality. But neither the military treaties nor the sentiment of the peoples recognized any such equivocal condition; the Diets promptly confirmed the action of their Governments, and when the Prussian Crown Prince, who was to command the army of the South, visited these kingdoms, bearing with him the fiery cross, lie was received with great enthusiasm.

Abroad the feeling towards Germany was more favourable than the feeling towards Prussia had been in 1866. The friendship of Russia, won in 1863 by the Polish convention and since assiduously fostered, now stood her in good stead. The Czar's influence was sufficient to steady both Austria and Denmark and to discourage the efforts of Beust to form an alliance of neutrals for the purpose of moderating Germany's terms in the event of the war going in her favour. It was owing to the benevolent neutrality of Russia and the politic restraint of Italy that Prussia was able to leave her eastern and southern frontiers denuded of troops, just as she had left her western

frontier unprotected in 1866 owing to the friendship of Napoleon.

When the die had been cast, France likewise looked about for friends, and met only with disappointment. The ally upon which Napoleon had counted with greatest confidence – the disaffection of the South – having proved a phantom, and Russia being cordially attached to Prussia, only Austria and Italy were possible. To a man driven to desperate straits it did not seem a far-fetched idea that Austria in particular would call to mind with gratitude the friendly dealings of 1866 and would now be willing to convert into a reality the compact which should have been concluded only a year before, yet had been whittled down to a pious exchange of good wishes. Beust readily offered Austria's conciliatory services, but for these Napoleon had no use, knowing that it was now too late for parley. Instead, he sounded the Minister as to the chances of an active co-operation, and urged him as a first step to try to win the Emperor's acceptance of the idea of a European conference.

The Government in Vienna recalled with relief the condition upon which the proposed alliance of 1869 was to have been contingent, viz. that in the event of a war between France and Prussia Austria, if so disposed, should have the right to remain neutral. Now Austria was so disposed, and no temptation could induce her to take sides. Apart from the fact that the Emperor and his Government had gone far to re-establish relations of confidence and friendship with Prussia, self-interest was altogether on the side of neutrality. It could not be good for Austria that either of the combatants should inflict crushing injury upon the other, and this consideration explained Beust's earlier attempts to prevent a catastrophe. A beaten Prussia, which was at least a possibility, would make Napoleon as much the patron of the Southern States as his uncle had been sixty years before. On the other hand, Prussia's success would mean the union of the South with the North and its permanent absorption in a Germanic empire. From Austria's standpoint, therefore, it was desirable that France and Prussia should continue to hold each other in check; only thus could she hope to retain the small influence in German affairs which still remained to her.

At a conference of Ministers of both monarchies which was held on July 18th to consider Austria's attitude, Beust wished to postpone a decision and for the present to await events, leaving later action to be

determined by expediency. Andrassy, however, called for the open and immediate acceptance of a policy of strict neutrality, and he carried the day. Beust's attitude was both irresolute and disingenuous. He was deeply concerned not to offend Napoleon, and on the same day (July 20th) that his Government announced Austria's decision to remain neutral he wrote to the ambassador Metternich in Paris a private letter assuring him that as regards France the neutrality would be benevolent, and that, though a passive friend, Austria would do her best to promote Napoleon's success. In the same letter he urged that France should allow Italy to take possession of Rome directly the French troops were withdrawn. "The question must be settled," he said; "we shall never have Italy sincerely on our side until we have plucked the Roman thorn out of her foot."

Italy was no readier than Austria to forgo the advantages of neutrality. Napoleon urged Victor Emmanuel by all the gods of his fathers to join him, and offered to withdraw his troops from Rome provided Italy would promise to respect the integrity of the papal enclave. The temptation to intervene was not great in the circumstances. The offer simply to withdraw French troops had little value in view of the fact that the King had never concealed his intention of seizing Rome for Italy directly events were favourable. On the other hand, a rupture with Prussia could offer him no profit, and in spite of his personal attachment to Napoleon he could not forget that he had fought side by side with that Power in 1866. After a struggle, more with his military advisers than his own mind, the King similarly decided to keep out of the fray.

Wherever else he looked, Napoleon met with the same disappointment. With a strange credulity he had hugged the hope that all his many efforts on behalf of struggling nationalities – not only the Italians, but the Hungarians and the Poles – would now have their reward in the rally of his political *protégés* to his help. He had to learn the statesman's hardest lesson, that in politics virtue must be its own reward. The only foreign legion that volunteered for his service was a miscellaneous band of adventurous spirits who responded to the call of the intrepid Garibaldi.

Public feeling in England at first and for some time leaned strongly to Germany's side, from a belief that France had wanted war and had wantonly provoked it. It must be remembered that the full story of the

Ems telegram was not yet known. That there was widespread sympathy with or understanding of the movement towards a larger unity in Germany may be doubted, though amongst the thoughtful sections of the population the movement had many warm friends. Nevertheless, where it existed the attachment to France, as to a country which had added so greatly to the patrimony of civilization, was marked by great cordiality and outspokenness. The feeling in Germany towards England, on the other hand. alternated between the extremes of heat and cold; it was effusively friendly when the influence of the Government and the Press seemed to favour the German cause, hostile and defiant when for any reason that influence seemed to veer round to the French side. Germany certainly had reason to complain later of a British neutrality which was held to be consistent with supplying her enemy with any and every kind of necessity she required. “We sit by.” wrote Sir Robert Morier with the vivacity which prevented his rise in a service in which opinions may neither be strongly expressed nor strongly held, “we sit by like a bloated Quaker, too holy to fight, but rubbing our hands at the roaring trade we are doing in cartridges and ammunition.” That was truer for Birmingham and the munition centres than for England at large, but the nation reaped the reproach and venom. Seldom has a nation gone to war with so little open moral support behind it as the French nation in 1870. The immeasurable incapacity and folly of its statesmanship had isolated France far more effectively than all Prussia’s past skilful diplomacy, and it seemed as though now, in the hour of her need, all the intangible forces and influences which Bismarck was accustomed to speak of as the imponderabilia of political life were against her and working on the side of a Government and a Minister who, unknown to the world as yet, had planned the struggle and were already counting on the booty. At the last moment the weight of this handicap was still further increased to the disadvantage of France. On July 21st the French Foreign Minister had circulated a strong though somewhat rhetorical indictment of Prussian foreign policy, which was held up to European reprobation as one of systematic aggression and spoliation. Thereupon Bismarck made one of those skilful unexpected moves by which he so often turned the tables upon his opponents in critical situations. Just when France was making this sadly needed attempt to set herself right with

Europe, and to allay the impatience with which even the Governments most friendly to her had watched her perverse diplomacy, he produced from his mysterious portfolio and published (July 25th) a document which he had long kept secret, waiting only for a favourable opportunity for turning it to a use proportionate to its importance.

This was the text of a proposal for the annexation of Belgium by France which Count Benedetti was represented to have made to him in 1867. The calculating tactician was no less clever in the choice of time for this surprising revelation than the means of giving it to the world, for he did this, not through his Foreign Office, but through the columns of the London *Times*.

The revelation showed France in a peculiarly unfavourable light, and neutral nations, which had never approved of the Due de Gramont's violent diplomatic methods, drew back into still greater reserve. To increase the effect created in England, Bismarck telegraphed to the German ambassador in London instructing him to tell the Foreign Secretary that this was only one of several proposals of the same kind, dating from the beginning of the Danish quarrel, by which Napoleon had tried to turn his neutrality to profitable account. "In the interest of peace," said Bismarck, "I have kept secret these proposals and treated them dilatorily." No one had ever suspected Bismarck to be half so virtuous, but there was no doubting the fact that the incriminating draft treaty existed and that it was in Benedetti's handwriting.

Napoleon promptly wrote to his Foreign Minister a letter in which he charged Bismarck with having himself tried to incite France to annex Belgium. Benedetti also replied to the charge of duplicity brought against him, and made out a good case for himself and France, but as Bismarck had had the first word and Europe was in a doubting mood, his repudiations fell flat. He had to admit that a proposal had been put before the Prussian Government in the terms of the draft treaty, but asserted that the incident occurred in 1866 and not in 1867, that its author was Bismarck himself, and that he, as the ambassador of France, had simply acted as Bismarck's tool and dupe. The draft treaty, he said, was the result of repeated verbal negotiations. "Wishing at one of our conversations to keep an exact report of these proposals, I agreed to transcribe them, in some sort, at

his dictation." The Due de Gramont later confirmed this story, and added that Bismarck had invited France to take both Luxemburg and Belgium as early as 1865. He did not say how much earlier Napoleon had planned the same scheme independently. The German Foreign Office, in a rejoinder to Benedetti's counter-charge, did not deny that negotiations occurred with France concerning both Luxemburg and Belgium, but pleaded that they "had been carried on by the Prussian Minister-President with a view to postponing a French attack upon Prussia." That admission alone was a strong point in favour of Benedetti's story. The ambassador was less credible, however, when he tried to acquit his Government of any knowledge of the proposed treaty. Ollivier has since shown that in these surreptitious transactions he acted at the direct instigation of the French Foreign Secretary and with the Emperor's assent.

The disclosures were chiefly interesting as throwing a lurid light upon the crooked ways of Prusso-French diplomacy at that time. Europe did not forget in her indignation that two at least are needed to make a conspiracy, and Bismarck was not exculpated. On his own confession he allowed Benedetti to communicate to him the contents of a document of questionable morality, discussed its terms freely with him, induced him to alter them in his presence, and then finally retained the document with the intention of compromising France when it became worth while. Such a proceeding was part of the day's work of a statesman who in the pursuit of his great plans never hesitated, as his secretary, Abeken, said, to employ "oblique and even crooked ways," holding that in politics the end justifies the means, but the reflections which it suggested were not pleasant. In a word, the only difference between the two intriguers was that in plotting with each other, Benedetti was straightforward and Bismarck a dissembler.

The revelation of the Bismarck-Benedetti draft treaty pointed to the wisdom of assuring to Belgium, whose position between the contending States offered to both a tempting base of operations, the neutrality guaranteed by the treaty of 1839. The Belgian ambassador in Paris had already given to the French Foreign Minister his Government's promise "to remain faithful to the principle of its neutrality and to fulfil scrupulously all its duties, during the continuance of the war," and the Duc de Gramont had similarly undertaken to "respect the neutrality of Belgian territory on condition

that it shall be respected by Prussia." This interchange of pledges having taken place, the Duke resented the action of Great Britain in proposing on July 31st the conclusion of a treaty with both France and Prussia under which that country undertook to defend Belgium's neutrality with all its forces by land and water in conjunction with either of the belligerent Powers, should the other violate Belgian territory. The recent revelations, upon the true inwardness of which few people were able as yet to form an opinion, had disquieted the public mind, however, and neutral countries generally were relieved and grateful when the two treaties had been completed. Similar engagements, arising out of the treaty of neutrality of 1867, were entered into regarding Luxemburg.

The French declaration of war arrived in Berlin on July 19th, and Bismarck said on the following day that it was the only official document which his Government had received from France in the candidature affair.

Only now did France realize the difficulty of her task, obvious though it had been from the first to her friends. Count Vitzthum, asked by Napoleon in 1868 what was thought in Germany of the prospect of a Franco-Prussian war, replied that it was thought to be inevitable. "But do not regard it as an easy work," he added; "it will be a terrible national struggle, in which the Southern States will be involved, and for France the continued possession of Alsace and Lorraine will be at stake." There is no evidence that the warning was taken to heart, either by Napoleon or by his Ministers. Of the latter both Ollivier and the Due de Gramont say that while they freely discussed the prospects of the war beforehand it occurred to no one to consider whether the military resources of the country would be equal to the strain. Recalling the Ministerial discussions which preceded the declaration of July 6th in the *Corps Législatif*, Ollivier wrote later: "Our first question then was, 'Is our army ready?' And we asked the question simply for form's sake, for not one of us had any doubt as to the reply."

Present and past Ministers of War had given emphatic assurances of the army's absolute preparedness for any ordeal. Niel, though he had not been allowed three years before to carry out in their completeness the military reforms which he regarded as necessary for the country's safety, had said: "Whether we are at peace or war

matters not to the Minister of War, for he is always ready"; while Lebœuf was confident that the army, if inferior to that of Prussia in numbers, was superior to it in quality and would prove capable of miracles. When challenged just as the final decision to declare war was taken, Lebœuf still gave the assurance that France was "completely ready," yet he of all men should have known the truth. The Emperor complained to Lord Malmesbury at a later date that he had been "deceived as to the strength and preparedness of his army." Even he, however, was not free from blame.

It was expected that half a million men would at once respond to the first call to arms – no one ever asked where they would come from – and there came just half that number, not too well equipped. As the war advanced this force was greatly increased, though at the time of maximum capacity the force put in the field by France was smaller than that mobilized by Germany at the beginning of hostilities. Not only so, but the administrative and transport managements were chaotic. The railways were few and ill-managed, for little or no thought had been given to the need for co-ordination; large bodies of troops were collected in centres without arms or equipment of any kind; the commissariat system was defective; the fortresses should have been well supplied with stores, but these had been neglected and were totally inadequate. The idea seemed to have been taken for granted that a war with Prussia would for France be a war of invasion, and that the Emperor's armies would merely have to cross the frontier and live on the fat of the enemy's land. Hence it was also that while the officers were provided with maps of Germany they were without maps of their own country. Even in the higher command the same want of foresight came to light, for the strategists had staked the fortunes of war upon one plan of campaign, and when this failed it had no other to fall back upon.

The Prussian military authorities had a far truer idea of the effective strength and efficiency of the French army at that time than the French military authorities themselves, and their estimate of its fighting capacity proved correct. It was this knowledge that led Bismarck to write to a Paris correspondent in 1869: "The opinion should not take root in Paris that we fear a war. A war in itself is always a misfortune, but the view that it would be a greater misfortune for us than for France, and that we have greater cause than

France to avoid it, is one which we do not understand here."

When the Emperor joined the army on July 28th, the intention was to take a vigorous offensive and to enter Germany simultaneously in three or four places. The plan was to invade South Germany from Alsace and Lorraine, and had that move been possible at the beginning, it might have changed the entire course of the campaign, for the frontiers were for a long time practically open and behind them was a very insufficient force. Of the three main bodies into which the French forces were divided, under Marshals Bazaine, MacMahon, and Canrobert respectively, with the Emperor as commander-in-chief, the first two concentrated in these provinces. Instead of being across the Rhine before the Prussians were ready, as the Paris newspapers had boasted they would be, the French armies were for a long time unable to move in force. The consequence was that while they were concentrating the Germans hurried half a million men to the frontier and before the enemy was ready for action on a large scale were far into his territory. The French tacticians contemplated only the offensive, but the offensive was never from the first in their hands; and when it had once passed to the invaders it rested in their power to organize and localize the campaign almost as they wished.

Prussia had no need to prepare for the war; she was prepared already, as always when fighting had to be done. The military machinery was in perfect order, and all that was needed was to set it in motion. The combined German forces, instead of falling below the estimates, exceeded them. In the fortnight from the middle of July there had been mobilized a field and garrison force of over 800,000 men, all in perfect readiness, and behind it were reserves of a quarter of a million and the Landwehr to an equal number. They were armed with the needle-gun, as in the campaigns of 1864 and 1866, but it proved inferior to the French Chassepot breech-loading rifle. On the other hand, the German artillery was on the whole superior to the French. As a precaution, a sufficient force was left within striking distance of the Bohemian and Danish frontiers, but the great mass of the field force set out at once towards the Rhine. The plan of campaign was to concentrate upon the capture of Paris, as the centre of France; the opposing forces were to be pressed back, as far as possible, in the direction of the less fertile northern departments; and

the invaders were to attack without cessation. There were three armies of invasion, as in the campaign against Austria, the first and smallest under General von Steinmetz, the second under Prince Frederick Charles, and the third under the Crown Prince, with whom was General von Blumenthal, as in 1866, as chief of staff. The King himself was commander-in- chief, and in his retinue were Moltke, Roon (the War Minister), and Bismarck. The Chancellor's presence in the field was greatly resented by the Generals, who had not forgotten how he had worked upon the King in the Bohemian campaign, and dictated its end from political rather than military considerations. Before he had entered France the jealous soldiers told him that he was not to attend the councils of war, but mind his own diplomatic business. In the end he minded both his business and much of theirs. More than once the Minister and the Chief of the General Staff quarrelled, and on one occasion the King had to witness an ugly display of their bad temper. In later years Bismarck had many frank things to say of the great strategist, while Moltke avenged himself more cruelly by saying as little as possible about the great statesman; in his *History of the Franco-German War* he does not mention Bismarck's name.

Before the end of July the first and second armies had crossed the Rhine, at Coblenz and Mayence, while the third remained for the time in the Bavarian Palatinate. Once more the superiority of the Prussian organization, generalship, tactics, equipment, and *moral* was shown. Nothing had been left to chance, and the fighting machine moved onward with a deadly directness and sureness. The shock of arms began in the early days of August and the first success fell to French troops, which took Saarbrücken. Elated by the trifling incident, Paris began to talk of the illuminations which should welcome the greater triumphs that were to come. The ground won, however, had immediately to be abandoned, and it was not recovered. Battle now followed battle with dramatic suddenness. Napoleon had clung to the idea that South Germany might at the last moment decide not to throw in its lot with the North, even if it did not actively take his side. The fatuity of this speculation was the first of many great surprises which the war was to bring to him. It was in vain that his Government issued a proclamation that the war was not against Germany but against Prussia and the policy of her principal Minister. In the first

decisive encounter the French were met and beaten by a force in which Prussian and Bavarian troops fought together. The effect of the German victories of Weissenburg, Wörth, and Spicheren within three days (August 4th-6th) was electrical; for these successes made any advance of French troops into Germany impossible, and placed it beyond doubt that the war would be fought out in the enemy's territory.

Napoleon kept back as long as possible the news of these reverses, and then made light of them, endeavouring to cheer Paris with the assurance that they would soon be made good. "*Tout peut se rétablir*," he telegraphed, retreating towards Metz when the Germans had crossed the frontier. But it did not, and now Paris, so lately elated, fell into a panic. Lord Lyons tells how when reports circulated that the Germans would soon be at the gates the Rothschilds and other bankers waited on him to beg that the British Government would intervene and check any further advance of the invaders towards their vaults and counting-houses. In August, blaming the Government for the inauspicious beginning of the war, and clamouring for an efficient Government, the Chamber compelled Ollivier to resign. Napoleon himself did not escape severe censure. At the request of the Empress-Regent a new Cabinet was formed by General Montauban, and in order to appease the populace, which called for wholesale changes, the Emperor resigned the chief command of the army to Bazaine and withdrew to MacMahon's camp.

With slight fluctuations, the course of the campaign continued as it began. Outnumbered and out-generalled, the French, in spite of superb heroism, lost battle after battle, until by the middle of August the Germans were in full possession of the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine with the exception of the two fortified towns of Strassburg and Metz, and these were closely besieged. Their successes of Mars-la-Tour, St. Privat, and Gravelotte, won only at a terrible sacrifice of life, settled the fate of Metz, which was left isolated and beleaguered, its reduction only a question of time and privation. Over 150,000 men, under Bazaine, were cooped up in the fortress, and it was in vain that MacMahon, with an army almost as large, tried to bring relief, for an enemy force of a quarter of a million was on his track.

Meanwhile, in feverish haste General Trochu had put the fortifications and defences of Paris in order for a siege, and not too

soon, for by the end of August news reached the alarmed in habitants that a large army of investment was on the march. Everywhere the French were now on the defensive, hard pressed, and facing desperate odds. The first overpowering disaster of the war came on September 1st and 2nd, when MacMahon's army was surrounded and shattered before Sedan. The French losses exceeded 120,000 men, of whom 17,000 were killed or wounded; 21,000 were taken prisoners in fighting, 83,000 capitulated, and several thousand more crossed into Belgium. Napoleon surrendered himself with the ill-fated army, and on the following day was taken, a captive, into Germany and lodged in the royal castle of Wilhelmshöhe, outside Cassel. It was the beginning of an epidemic of great surrenders. On September 23rd Toul and on the 27th Strassburg followed suit, an army of 17,000 men falling into German hands in the latter case. Metz, under Bazaine, maintained a brave resistance for a few weeks longer, but despairing of relief and suffering from want of food, it capitulated, after seventy days' siege, on October 27th, and again 173,000 laid down their arms. Four armies had been captured within two months, causing Bismarck to declare with heavy humour that if another were taken he would resign office forthwith.

In the midst of these disasters at home a blow was struck at French prestige abroad. Early in the war the French troops had been withdrawn from Rome, and a miscellaneous force of all nations had taken their place. On September 20th, almost on the anniversary of the Franco-Italian Treaty of 1864, guaranteeing the integrity of the papal dominions, Victor Emmanuel entered the city with his army. At one stroke French influence in Italy was destroyed. A touch of irony was given to this final act in the story of Italian unity by the fact that the Pontiff defended his rights with all the tenacity and asperity of a temporal Sovereign.

Already Paris had given a further and more serious sign of its resentment at the inability of the generals to win battles. Lord Clarendon, speculating upon the political gyrations in which the French, whom he knew so well, might next engage, wrote to the British ambassador in Paris on August 31, 1869: "I have an instinct that they will drift into a republic before another year is over." The prophecy or premonition was fulfilled almost to the day. On September 4th, two days after Napoleon was led captive from Sedan

to Cassel, a revolution broke out in Paris, the third republic was proclaimed, and the Empress fled to England. The Senate dispersed declaring its unaltered attachment to the captive Napoleon, but the Chamber, which on July 13th had echoed with the cry *"Vive l'Empereur!"* now decreed the deposition of the imperial dynasty. A Government of National Defence was formed, with General Trochu as President, Jules Favre as Foreign Minister, Léon Gambetta as Minister of the Interior, and General Le Flô as Minister of War. Thiers was urged to take office, but his time had not yet come. France tacitly endorsed the decision of the metropolis.

For a short time the new Executive, which divided itself between Paris and Tours, believed that Germany would be willing to agree to favourable terms of peace now that France had renounced Napoleon. Early in September the King of Prussia was called upon by proclamation to leave the country, and Victor Hugo, in a fervid manifesto, appealed to the fraternal feelings of the German nation. Paper demonstrations of the kind failing, the Executive made formal overtures to the German headquarters, now perilously near Paris. Bismarck at first refused to negotiate with them, on the ground that they had no mandate and could bind only themselves. The only legitimate authority was still Napoleon, and he was a captive, disowned by his own people, or at least by Paris. Nevertheless, he agreed in the middle of the month to discuss terms of peace with Jules Favre.

Already there was busy talk of the annexations upon which Germany was to insist, and Bismarck found it expedient to issue a circular letter explaining why territory was necessary. "We cannot seek guarantees for the future in French feeling," said this statement (September 13th). "We must not deceive ourselves; we must soon expect a new attack; we cannot look forward to a lasting peace, whatever the conditions we might impose. It is their defeat which the French nation will never forgive. If now we were to withdraw from France with out any accession of territory, without any contribution, without any advantage but the glory of our arms, there would remain in the French nation the same hatred, the same spirit of revenge, for the injury done to their vanity and to their love of power." Four days after the fall of Sedan, Favre (September 6th) had issued a circular despatch to the diplomatic agents of France abroad, declaring "We

will not cede one inch of our territory or one stone of our fortresses." It was in this impossible frame of mind that he met Bismarck on the 19th and 20th. Although the German demands were not pressed in their later hard form, France was unwilling to yield anything at all, and the negotiations broke down.

Bismarck had assured a member of the British embassy several days before this that Germany intended to demand only the fortresses of Strassburg and Metz, and not the departments of which they were the capitals. There was, however, no doubt at all that the decision had already been taken on the pressure of the generals to insist at all costs upon the cession of the whole of Alsace and at least part of Lorraine. Warning voices were raised by warm friends of Germany in England against such a measure as certain to exasperate a proud foe and leave open a festering wound, but they were unheeded. A violent change came over the British mind and attitude directly the position of France was seen to be hopeless, and Germany showed signs of an intention to deal harshly with her. Sedan had increased the admiration for the prowess and resource of the invading army, but it also gave rise to the hope that an immediate peace would be offered to the stricken country on favourable terms. When that hope was disappointed there was a strong revulsion of feeling. Sympathy with Germany and the German national movement gave place to sympathy with vanquished France and her efforts to renew herself. There was a strong disposition to blame Napoleon personally for the disaster which had overtaken France, and it was contended that as the Empire had fallen the nation as such ought not to be required to suffer unduly. By thus changing her ground Great Britain at once forfeited the good-will of Germany, yet because she was unable to render France any useful assistance no thanks were reaped in that quarter, and in the end the war left her in disfavour with both combatants.

Mr. Gladstone, firm in his belief in moral influences and the power of eloquent despatches, was even in favour of bringing diplomatic pressure to bear on Germany in discouragement of any annexation against the will of the population concerned. Lord Granville, though more in sympathy with France than was his chief, was opposed to any departure from the principle of strict non-intervention, and no official protest was made. The Queen, however, wrote privately to the King of Prussia entreating him to offer to France such terms as she might

accept with honour. “Your name,” she said, “will stand yet higher if at the head of your victorious army you now resolve to make peace in a generous spirit.” All that the King would promise was that he would be “as generous as my duties towards my own people permit. In shaping the terms of peace I must place in the first line the protection of Germany against the next attack of France, which no generosity will stop.” An appeal addressed to the King in October by Empress Eugénie, that he would forgo any claim to French territory as an act of statecraft, and warning him that the contrary course would create enduring hatred, was answered in similar terms.

Even in Germany opinion was then far from unanimous as to the wisdom of claiming back territories which had not been part of Germany for two hundred years, and the Crown Prince, the Grand Duke of Baden, and the Duke of Coburg all warned the King that annexation would be a political blunder, for the Alsatians were passionately attached to France and wished to remain French. The historical case for regarding the cession of Alsace as merely an act of restitution was not a very strong one. It was the impotence of Germany during the Thirty Years’ War which caused Alsace, then a mosaic of republics, to seek the friendship and protection of France, a step leading later to complete and amicable amalgamation. Since 1789 no part of France had been more passionately attached to the life and ideals of the common country, with whose glory and greatness its history now became intimately identified. It was an Alsatian who inspired the soldiers of the Revolution with the “Marseillaise,” for this unique war-song was originally composed for the troops of Strassburg; and Alsace gave to the first Napoleon some of his best generals and strongest battalions. Bismarck regarded the nationality argument for the return of even the more German of the provinces as merely sentimental and a “professorial idea,” and in the attitude which he ultimately adopted on this question he was influenced altogether by practical considerations. The capitulation of Sedan, combined with the close investment of Metz, Strassburg, and other fortified towns, had created, not only in Germany but in the German Headquarters Staff, the belief that French resistance had spent itself. “The war must really be over now,” Moltke wrote home in September; “ France has no longer an army.” On the contrary, the war was only beginning. Never did a nation show greater fortitude and heroism under reverse than

France at that time. Responding to the fiery appeals of Gambetta and the new Executive, the people faced the terrible odds with redoubled determination, and new armies were formed by a *levée en masse* of men of fighting age. For strongly though the German armies had been reinforced by reserves and large levies of partially trained *Landwehr* men, they did not attempt to force a way further into France, with the result that the north-west, the centre, and the south served as recruiting grounds for new forces and as bases for the organization of a new defence. The unorganised and untrained remnant of the nation's manhood, not to be denied the honour of sacrifice, armed itself with such weapons as were at hand, and forming an immense body of francs-tireurs, inflicted great inconvenience upon the enemy. Bismarck was for hanging at sight every armed man not in uniform. It would have meant wholesale massacre, but objections based on this ground he brushed aside with the curious plea, "I attach little value to human life because I believe in another world; if we lived for three or four hundred years, it would be a different matter." Terrible reprisals were, in fact, visited upon the irregular combatants.

For a time it seemed as though France had still a chance of shaking herself free from the enemy's grasp, and as the year neared its close the invading army was no longer as confident of a crushing triumph as it had been after the eastern fortresses had fallen. Three months after his thoughts had first turned homeward, Moltke wrote: "No one will say how long this frightful war will last. An entire nation in arms is not to be underestimated. After New Year we may have a million men against us." Roon, too, who in September had written home from Rheims, *"L'équilibre* has been completely destroyed: is not Prussia's sword to-day the sceptre of Europe?" reflected now: "How, when and where this war will end, God only knows! . . . A little *suffisance* and a little more modesty would be a good thing for many people" (December 10, 1870). In the consciousness of inflexible courage and determination the French nation for a time clung to the hope , if not of victory, at least of such an honourable peace as would still enable it to buy off the invaders with a money *douceur*, thus speedily wiping off the fair face of France the stain of invasion. If, however, France was under the obligation of honour to continue defence, so was Germany under the necessity of continuing attack and of pressing home her advantage in every direction. After Sedan a bitterer spirit entered into

the struggle on both sides. Regarding their enemy's refusal to surrender as mere perversity, and exasperated by the guerilla warfare practised by the *francs-tireurs*, the German generals showed an increasing disposition to inflict upon the French population the worst horrors of war. When Paris was hopelessly closed in, Gambetta succeeded in escaping to Bordeaux; there the Government was reconstituted, and from that safe city of refuge he sustained the spirit of the nation by inspiring manifestos and appeals for "resistance to the uttermost." But unity, enthusiasm, and readiness for sacrifice were unavailing in the lack of the supreme military efficiency towards which Prussia had been working in silence for so many years, and the sequence of disaster continued almost unbroken.

In October Thiers began a round of visits to European Courts and Governments, beginning with Great Britain. He sought to enlist moral influence, not active intervention, on behalf of a peace on moderate terms that should be honourable to France. "He seems come just to do what he can," Mr. Gladstone wrote after meeting him, but what he could do, either in England or elsewhere, was little. Disappointed at the cold *douche* he received in London, he yet proceeded undismayed to Vienna and St. Petersburg. From the Chancellor Beust – now more wary than three months ago – and the Czar he received much sympathy, but nothing more substantial, and before his return home his Government knew that the only alternatives before it were to make the best terms it could with an exacting enemy or to fight on and take the risk. Faced by terrible odds, the French nation as one man yet chose the better part, and the war continued.

When the new year opened France had still three armies in the field, in the west, north, and east, but their fighting capacity had deteriorated. Everything seemed to depend upon the movements before Paris, whose reduction, in the opinion of the German military council, promised to end the war. The position of the garrison and the civil population became daily more critical as the investment drew closer and the supplies of food decreased. In the forts alone there was an army of a quarter of a million to feed, and behind them was a crowded city of one and three-quarter millions. After a long course of grinding privation, stark hunger at last stared Paris in the face. Every attempt of the garrison to break through the chain of steel which encircled the outer suburbs was repelled, yet the population endured

heroically. Finally the invaders recognized that the only hope of bending its stubborn will was to fire on the city. The diarist Abeken claims for Bismarck responsibility for this measure and its execution. He had wanted it, in fact, as early as October, when Abeken wrote from the Prussian headquarters: "The idea of Bismarck opposing the bombardment of Paris because of its works of art or of the splendours of Paris itself is incredibly ridiculous." For some time Moltke disagreed and had his way, though only after violent disputes with the autocratic Minister, whose constant meddling in military matters he resented. Now he agreed that the time had come for rough measures, and the bombardment began on January 5th.

An attempt, organized by Gambetta, in the middle of the month to relieve Paris by simultaneous movements by the French armies in the field and determined sorties from the forts was frustrated, and, recognizing that all hope was past, Favre obtained permission to open negotiations for the capitulation of the city and the end of the war, and with this object in view he appeared at the German headquarters at Versailles on January 23rd. The French resistance had now been broken down, and it remained to be seen on what terms peace could be bought under the desperate conditions prevailing. After the capitulation of Sedan and the French refusal to accept defeat, the iron entered more deeply into the souls of the invaders. Thiers had seen that when he tried his hand at peace negotiations at the beginning of November. The attempt came to nought, but he "thought he could guess that two milliards (of francs), with Alsace and part of Lorraine, without Metz, would be the conditions of a peace signed immediately." Even those terms the generals were no longer prepared to offer. The conditions of the capitulation of Paris and an armistice were discussed for several days, and on the 28th the agreement was signed. Moltke, at the beginning of the investment, believed that the capital would be reduced in ten weeks, and Trochu himself did not expect that it would hold out so long: the resistance lasted, in fact, four and a half months, and in the end it was hunger and not cannon shot which gave to the besieging army its victory. Four days later came a further misfortune, for on February 1st Bourbaki's army of 80,000 men, hard pressed in the south-east, was led over the Swiss frontier by General Clinchant (who had taken the Marshal's command on his breakdown) in order to escape the greater humiliation of

surrender.

When Favre, representing the Government of National Defence, appeared in the German headquarters, Bismarck had bluntly refused to negotiate with the self-appointed Executive, and insisted that peace could only be concluded with the nation as represented by a duly authorized body. The armistice was therefore concluded for three weeks – the Paris forts to be meanwhile evacuated – during which time a national assembly was to be elected, to meet at Bordeaux in the place of the temporary Executive and decide whether France should continue the war or lay down arms.

Gambetta tried hard to secure the return of an assembly that would be willing to support him in the policy of no surrender, but on Bismarck's protest against a too obvious attempt to frustrate the free voice of the nation he resigned. The elections took place on February 8th, and the Assembly met four days later. Thiers, the man who on the fateful 15th of July had incensed the Chamber with the bold declaration, "It is not for any essential interest of France, but owing to the fault of the Cabinet, that we are going to war," was returned by twenty-six constituencies, and he was chosen provisional head of the State with the title Chief of the Executive of the Republic, pending the nation's decision as to the future form of government. Most of the responsible leaders of France now recognized that to defend the national cause any longer by arms was hopeless and that what remained to be saved must be saved by diplomacy, and that speedily. Thiers and Favre, the Foreign Minister, were therefore chosen peace plenipotentiaries, and with a committee of fifteen they at once left for Versailles. At the same time Thiers sent the Duc de Broglie to London to enlist influence there in favour of an honourable peace.

It was clear that the terms of peace had already been peremptorily settled by the generals, and that there could be little opportunity for successful bargaining. Nevertheless, Thiers gallantly contested every demand and gained every concession that was humanly possible. The negotiations lasted from February 21st to the 26th, on which day the peace preliminaries were signed. The terms created intense bitterness throughout France. There was on the Prussian side a feeling that no punishment could be too severe for the vanquished enemy. The French had been beaten, but with obstinate pride they refused to admit it. Their stubborn will must, therefore, be broken, and it could

be broken only by the rod of humiliation. There was magnanimity, and even chivalry, in Prussia's treatment of Austria and her only active ally, Saxony, in 1866; neither was shown towards France in 1871. France was, in fact, in the least favourable position possible for negotiation. When a show of resistance was made, Bismarck had only to play off Napoleon against the Republican plenipotentiaries, and threaten to restore the Empire , and he had his way. The territories annexed comprised the departments of the Lower and Upper Rhine, the greater part of the departments of the Moselle and the Meurthe, and two districts of the department of the Vosges. Almost the whole of Alsace, with Strassburg, but excluding Belfort, and one-third of Lorraine, including Metz, affectionately described by Thiers as "*la ville française par excellence*," were cut bodily out of France.

Thiers had fought desperately for Metz, and both Bismarck and the Crown Prince would have renounced it had they had their way. Moltke and the generals were resolute, however, and, having the last word with the King, they carried their point. When in addition Belfort was demanded, Thiers refused, whatever the consequences; whereupon Bismarck said: "Believe me, I have done everything I could, but as to leaving you any part of Alsace it is impossible."" Concede Belfort, and I will sign at once," said Thiers. Bismarck himself was willing enough: the obstacle then, as before, was the Chief of the General Staff. He made urgent representations to Moltke, however, with the result that a little later he was able to say to Thiers: "I have an alternative to propose to you. Which would you prefer – Belfort or the renunciation of an entry into Paris?" Thiers, with Favre's assent, immediately chose Belfort, and so the bargain was struck.

Unquestionably, Alsace had been the great prize from the beginning. When in the middle of August Count von Bismarck-Bohlen was made governor of the province, the Prussian General Staff published a map defining as the limits of his government the very frontiers which later became the frontiers of enlarged Germany. Yet at that time neither Strassburg nor Metz had been invested. It was recalled later how thirty years before (1841) Moltke, speculating upon the outcome of a war on the western frontier, had written that Alsace and Lorraine were for France stolen goods and that though the treaties of 1815 had confirmed her possession of them, should she begin a new war against Germany "we ought not to sheathe the sword until we

have obtained our whole right and France has paid us her whole debt."

On the question of the money indemnity Prussia was less intractable. The first sum demanded was eight milliards of marks, and the first counter-offer of France was one of two milliards: by splitting the difference a bargain was struck at five milliards, equal to two hundred million pounds. From this amount thirteen million pounds were deducted to cover the value of the railways in the ceded territories. The first milliard of the indemnity was to be paid before the end of 1871, and the remainder during the succeeding three years, German troops remaining in occupation of the country meantime, but evacuating departments successively as the due payments were made.

Before the Peace Preliminaries could be effective the assent of the Government and Assembly at Bordeaux was needed, and Bordeaux was far away – so far that it seemed unable to realize the hopeless situation that prevailed in the actual field of hostilities or the hard spirit of the victors. There was grumbling for a time and even refusal to confirm conditions so much severer than had been expected. It was only when the two tribunes had taken to Bordeaux a true story of the desperate outlook that the irreconcilable deputies yielded, and on March 1st Favre was able to telegraph to Bismarck that the Assembly accepted the terms, ratifications being exchanged the following day at Versailles. For acceptance there voted 548 deputies, while 106 were against. In the minority was Victor Hugo, who in a dramatic speech prophesied that the "day would come when France would rise again invincible and take back not only Alsace and Lorraine but the Rhineland with Mayence and Cologne, and in return would give to Germany a republic, so freeing Germany from its Emperors, as an equivalent for the dethronement of Napoleon." Before leaving the Assembly the Alsatian deputies recorded their earnest protest against the action of the territories, declaring as null and void "a compact which disposes of us without our consent," and calling upon the people of Alsace and Lorraine to preserve "their filial affection for the France now absent from their homes until the day when she returns to take her place there again."

The territory taken from France had a population of 1,- 600,000, and comprised the seat of a highly developed and prosperous industry, principally the manufacture of cotton goods and machinery. The

printed fabrics of Alsace in particular were famous and superior to any produced in Germany at that time. It was just in the production of artistic goods like these that Germany had hitherto lagged behind, and the advantage of absorbing this province – which was at once a factory and a school – was incalculable. The inhabitants of the annexed territories were given the right to cross over into France and so retain their French citizenship, and during the time allotted a large population, drawn from all classes, exercised this option. "All those who could go went," says a French historian; "those who remained wept in grief that they could not abandon their homes." Just as after Sadowa the King of Prussia had been eager to enter Vienna at the head of his victorious troops, so now he planned a triumphal progress into Paris, and was willing to abandon Belfort rather than forgo it. The scheme failed, as the earlier scheme had failed, and the quicker wit of the Frenchman was the reason in both cases. Thiers was urgent in his demand that Paris should be spared this humiliation, but consideration for the feelings of a beaten foe was to the mind neither of the King nor his military counsellors. By completing the ratifications on the day appointed for the military spectacle, however, Thiers wrecked the ambitious plan of the royal Commander-in-chief and his generals, to their deep mortification. A large body of troops entered one quarter of the city, but the King was absent. On March 7th the German Headquarters Staff left Versailles, and three days later the National Assembly, fresh from Bordeaux, took its place.

Bismarck's attitude on the annexation question has been a subject of much controversy. It is well known that in later years he took pains to present himself in the light of the moderator, standing between vanquished France and the rapacious generals. That was also the *rôle* which he claimed to have played at the close of the Bohemian war. The diligent student of his life and speeches will, indeed, recall not a few occasions upon which Bismarck endeavoured after the event to disclaim, or minimize his own share of responsibility for, measures or decisions whose wisdom or success became increasingly doubtful with the lapse of time, for with all his greatness Bismarck did not despise popularity, though more than unpopularity he hated failure. Upon the question of the French annexations he found himself constantly at variance with Moltke and the generals, since for him political considerations came first, and these seldom seemed to coincide with

the views and requirements of the military experts. There was hardly any limit to the punishment which the generals were prepared to visit upon the beaten foe. They wanted enlarged frontiers and a broken France, caring nothing for the political consequences of excessive severity, while these for the statesman were paramount.

"The enemy must be destroyed and under our feet," Blumenthal wrote in his Diary in September; "a Blücher, with his hatred of France, is lacking"; and, still deploring Bismarck's restraining influence, he commented as late as February 24th: " Bismarck is carrying on too fine a policy, taking into account matters which do not appear to me to be pertinent. Now it is the foreign Powers, now consideration for the enemy, which must not be mortally embittered, etc. To the simple intelligence of a soldier all this appears comical. The beaten-down enemy must so bleed that he will not be able to stand up for a hundred years: he must be bound in chains which will prevent him from thinking of revenge."

From first to last Bismarck favoured a much smaller cession of territory than the generals demanded, and had he had his way it is possible that no part of Lorraine might have been taken. To the twelfth hour, indeed, he questioned the wisdom of retaining Metz, as being a French city whose inhabitants would be sure to make disaffected German citizens and so cause the new Empire much harm. "I do not like the idea of so many Frenchmen being in our house against their will," he said on February 22nd. He then suggested that it would be far better to accept another milliard of francs instead of Metz. "We would then," he said, "take 800,000,000 francs and build ourselves a fortress a few miles further back, somewhere about Falkenberg or towards Saarbrücken; we should then make a clear profit of two hundred millions." In the following year he told Count Beust at Gastein that "he had opposed the acquisition of Metz because of the disaffection of the inhabitants, and that he only yielded in consequence of the urgent demands of the military authorities, who said that it would make a difference of 100,000 men in time of peace." On the whole, therefore, Bismarck's claim that he was disposed to deal far more gently with France than the soldiers wished appears to be well founded.

Even now that the conditions of peace had been decided and the invaders had carried home the trophies of victory, the troubles of

France were not at an end. No sooner had the main body of the investing army withdrawn from Paris than the lawless elements in the populace gained the upper hand, and, reinforced by the demoralized remnants of the National Guard, broke out in wild insurrection on March 18th, and ten days later, having in the meantime taken possession of the government of the city, proclaimed the Commune at the Hôtel de Ville. The outbreak was the result of a concourse of untoward circumstances. Genuine fear that the new republic was in danger, unreasoning resentment that the Prussian troops had been allowed to do what there was no possibility of preventing them from doing – to enter Paris – and the indiscreet administrative measures of friends, irritating a population which had already been goaded past bearing by its enemies, were among the causes of disaffection; but in addition Paris was overrun by unruly adventurers, native and foreign, ready for any desperate exploit, and the criminal classes were only too ready to add their contribution of villainy to the general confusion. Then the Internationalists saw, in the apparent bankruptcy of the existing political and social order, an opportunity of putting their ideas into practice, and in so doing they made matters worse.

Not until outrageous excesses had been perpetrated upon person and property, until Paris had been the scene of violence and bloodshed far exceeding anything experienced in the worst siege of the war, and rigorous expiation had been exacted from the insurgents – for General Galliffet, who quelled the insurrection, paid the mischief-makers back with interest – were peace and good government restored at the end of May. The interlude of crime and destruction delayed the completion of the peace negotiations, for the Government was driven to obtain German consent to the increase of the forces before Paris beyond the strength stipulated in the preliminaries, and to call in the aid of the returned prisoners of war, who were to have remained interned behind the Loire until the formal conclusion of peace. Before this time Napoleon had been released, and had sought refuge in England for the third time in his fitful life.

The further negotiations over the definitive treaty of peace were continued at Brussels, and at first moved slowly. At one time it seemed as though the Government of Thiers would not prove strong enough to carry out the preliminaries accepted at Versailles, and the German generals were ready to throw back into France at a moment's

notice the armies which had been withdrawn; on April 24th the Federal Diet sanctioned a new loan of eighteen million pounds with that contingency in view. In order to hasten matters, Bismarck insisted that the negotiations should be removed out of the French atmosphere of the Belgian capital to Frankfort, and there the treaty was signed on May 10th.

The losses to the two nations in killed and wounded during this war of seven months have been variously estimated. The latest estimate for France, that of M. Hanotaux, places the number of killed at 139,000 and that of wounded at 143,000, while in addition 339,000 men were treated in hospitals for miscellaneous diseases. Moltke put the German loss in killed, wounded, and missing at 6,247 officers and 123,453 men, a total of 129,000; Dr. Engel, a careful statistician, has since estimated the loss at 45,000 in killed and 83,000 in wounded and missing, or together 128,000; but other estimates run as high as 175,000 and 180,000. Nearly half a million French soldiers were sent as prisoners into Germany; nearly a quarter of a million were prisoners in France; and over 90,000 were interned in Switzerland.

The marvellous recuperative power shown by France after the disaster of 1870-71 must be recalled, since it was indirectly responsible for a renewal of war-alarms several years later. It is common to speak of the war as for France not merely a disaster, which it was, but a *débâcle*, which strictly speaking it was not. A spirit of arrogance and vanity had come over the nation, engendering fatal self-confidence and self-deception, which in their turn had given rise to a false sense both of security and superiority, and caused France to rest in sluggish and enervating content upon the legacies and achievements of the past. Of these things the downfall was complete, but France herself was stronger for the ordeal through which she passed. The spirit of the new France, chastened and cleansed by defeat, was reflected by the words spoken by the President of the Republic, M. Thiers, just after the conclusion of peace: “Our policy is that of peace, equally removed from discouragement as from defiance, moved by the conviction that a reorganized France will be necessary for Europe always, and that only such a France will be able to discharge its duties to the other States and to herself.”

The whole energy of the nation was now directed towards the

immense task of making good the ravages done by the war, of replacing the wealth sacrificed in works of destruction, and not least of re-creating the army, adding to its virtues of heroism and valour the equally necessary virtues of discipline and efficiency. What France lost by earlier lethargy it gained doubly by concentrated industry. Gambetta gave the nation the inspiration which it needed when he said on June 24th that its motto must be *"Le travail, encore le travail, et toujours le travail."* And work France did with heart and soul and strength. Unknown and unsuspected stores of spiritual strength were revealed by the supreme effort which was now made by a reunited nation to find its way back to the forsaken paths of prudence, discipline, and self-control. All that the nation possessed of material treasure was likewise contributed to the common stock. In June, 1871, the National Assembly sanctioned a loan of two milliards of francs, and on the day of issue it was subscribed twice over. Bismarck had professed fear that France would not pay the instalments of the indemnity punctually. He was soon to be disabused, and to know that the one wish of the vanquished nation was to hand over the last sou with the utmost speed and be left alone with its sorrow.

By the terms of the treaty the first milliard of francs had to be paid before the end of 1871 and the remaining four milliards within three years of the signing of the Peace Preliminaries. On June 29, 1872, however, a supplementary agreement was concluded, providing for the earlier payment of the instalments and the speedier withdrawal of the alien garrison. The agreement was concluded at the wish of France itself, and as with each payment additional departments were evacuated, its effect was that the hated force of occupation disappeared over the Rhine much sooner than had been hoped or intended. The last instalment was due on March 1, 1875, but it was paid on September 5, 1873. When the French Government invited a loan of three milliard francs to enable the later contributions to be paid, subscriptions came from all the money markets of Europe to an aggregate amount exceeding fourteen times the sum required. The eagerness with which foreign investors were prepared to entrust their treasure to France was eloquent of the faith felt in her power of recuperation, but it also indicated a general conviction that a long period of peace had opened.

Midway in the war an event occurred which further strengthened

the friendly relationships between the rulers of Prussia and Russia. The Czar had made it clear both before and during the war that his sympathies were with Prussia and the German cause. Hence, when the Preliminaries of Peace were signed, King William telegraphed to him: " Prussia will never forget that it is due to you that the war has not taken far larger dimensions. May God bless you for it! For ever your grateful friend William." The Czar replied: "I am happy to have been able to show you my sympathy as your devoted friend. May the friendship which unites us assure the happiness and fame of both countries!" In supporting Prussia, Russia had asked for no reward, but that did not mean that one was not expected. A little later Bismarck was able to give a practical proof of his country's gratitude. The war had relaxed the usual regard for international engagements. In August Italy had violently taken possession of Rome; in October Russia declared that she could no longer be bound by the Treaty' of Paris of 1856. It will be remembered that this treaty opened the Black Sea to the mercantile marine of all countries, but prohibited the Powers of the littoral from using the sea for ships of war or building arsenals thereon. Far-seeing statesmen had always regarded the prohibition as unwise and unpractical. Lord Palmerston declared, at the time the treaty was concluded, that the irritating stipulations would not last, and he promised them a life of seven or possibly ten years. They lasted a little longer, yet always under protest of Russia, whose movements they were deliberately intended to harass.

The preoccupation of two of the signatory Powers offered to Russia a convenient opportunity for getting rid of the Pontus articles. Accordingly, on October 31st, Prince Gortchakoff, in a circular note to the Powers, repudiated them. The irregularity of the proceeding was pointed out by most of the Governments concerned, but all of them recognized that it was not worth quarrelling about. Lord Granville despatched Mr. Odo Russell to Bismarck in order to sound him, and he, using large latitude, declared that unless Russia withdrew its circular England would go to war, if necessary, without allies. The threat was sheer bluff, though it appears to have been good bluff, or at least Bismarck allowed his visitor to think so, for he immediately proposed a conference on the subject. To Gortchakoff, who, according to Bismarck, loved conferences, since they meant more stars and orders, the proposal was acceptable, and the rest of the Powers

welcoming it, this mode of adjusting the question was adopted. The conference accordingly met in London in the following January, and in March a new treaty was signed by which the neutralization of the Black Sea was annulled; henceforth Russia was to be entitled to maintain as large a fleet as it wished in the Black Sea, but the right of Turkey to control the passage of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles was to remain unchanged, and to that extent the old principle of the mare clausum was preserved. Prussia gave to her ally cordial assistance at the conference. It was widely believed that in repudiating the treaty Gortchakoff had acted with Bismarck's knowledge and connivance. The two Chancellors had been in conference in Berlin at the commencement of the war, and it is not likely that a question of such importance to Russia was then overlooked.

THE NEW EMPIRE, 1870-1874

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THE REMARK OF THIERS to Bismarck, as he laid down his pen after signing the Preliminaries of Peace, that France had given to Germany unity, spoken though it was in bitterness of spirit, was true. The German Empire was literally created on the battlefield, for not only was it the natural outcome of a war in which all the German tribes fought together against a hereditary foe, but the treaties which brought the States of the South into federal relationship with those of the North were concluded at Versailles, within sight of the ring of German steel which enveloped Paris. It was significant of Bismarck's determination to run no risks, now that the last stage of the struggle for unity had been reached, that he opened negotiations with the Soverèigns and Governments of the still outstanding States immediately the French had shown the first signs of wavering and had asked the price of peace. To those who suggested that this was lightning diplomacy the Chancellor replied that it was necessary to secure the adhesion of the South before there was time for the prevailing enthusiasm to evaporate. Because the treaties which followed were concluded hurriedly, they were faulty, and he admitted it, but now as ever he followed the principle of accepting something less than he wished and being contented with that.

No one doubted any longer that unity would now be completed, yet the acceptance of unity as a foregone conclusion did not diminish the difficulties still in the way – the old sentiment of particularism, nowhere so strong as in the South, unwillingness to surrender any of the substance of political independence, and, above all, jealousy of Prussia and fear of Prussian domination, a sentiment which may have been exaggerated yet which was very real and not altogether without justification. To the removal of these difficulties not merely a resolute will but unfailing tact and resource, and above all an inexhaustible fund of common sense, were needed. Blood and iron had done their part in the rough work of the battlefield, but for the delicate tasks of the council-chamber other and finer weapons were needed.

The principal State to be won over for the larger union was Bavaria; if it could be brought in, the other three States still remaining outside would be sure to follow – Baden, with alacrity, since her ruler had been knocking at the door for admission in vain ever since 1866, and complaining of the discourtesy which had kept him waiting. In truth, a closer union promised for the States of the South great

practical advantage, for whereas under the existing military treaties they were entirely without influence upon the foreign policy of the North German Government, yet were virtually compelled to accept its results, and if necessary to place their armies at the disposal of Prussia in defending it, as members of a common federation they would have a direct voice in the shaping of events for whose consequences they would in effect have neither more nor less responsibility than in the past.

Conferences were begun as early as September. Rudolf Delbrück, President of the Federal Chancellery Office and since 1868 a Prussian Minister, who had arranged the commercial treaties of 1862-5, was sent to South Germany to work out the federal problem from the economic side, but the political questions involved were discussed at. Versailles, and these created the greatest difficulty. The principal negotiators with whom Bismarck bargained there were Count Bray, Count Holnstein, and Herr von Lutz, representing Bavaria: Baron von Mittnacht and Herr von Suckow, representing Würtemberg; and Herr Jolly and Herr von Freydorff, representing Baden. Baron von Friesen, a Saxon Minister, represented the North German Governments, and Herr von Bennigsen, Herr von Blanckenburg, and Herr von Friedenthal were present as leading spokesmen of the national unity movement.

It is the custom to represent Bavaria as having eagerly responded to the overtures which were now made to her. No idea could be farther from the truth. Even now Bavaria would rather have continued independent had that been possible, and it threw in its lot with the rest of Germany only under pressure of an expediency which was hardly to be distinguished from compulsion. When the first unofficial inquiries were made as to the terms on which this State would be willing to join the North German Confederation, Bismarck was bewildered by the large concessions which were at once demanded. “Bismarck,” wrote at the time Prince Hohenlohe, ready though he was for union on terms, “counts on our isolation, and reckons very shrewdly that he will be able to force us in without any concessions.” But he had not allowed for the strength of Bavarian particularism. From the smaller forms of that tribal weakness Hohenlohe himself was free, yet he likewise was only prepared for absorption on condition that a large allowance was made for South German idiosyncrasies.

"We must arrive as soon as may be," he wrote on February 28, 1869, "at some form of arrangement which guarantees the South Germans the maintenance of their autonomy, their individuality, their kindly, comfortable national life, and at the same time make union with the North possible. Give the South Germans this guarantee, and they will gradually become part and parcel of the great German body politic; without it, never!"

Sir Robert Morier spoke of Bavaria as a State "by itself too small to live and too big to die." Morier could make much better epigrams than that. The real fault of Bavaria was that its head was out of proportion to its body; it was a small State with very much more than the due conceit of a large one. The Bavarian Government began by objecting to the idea of entering the existing Confederation at all, and demanding that it should be formally dissolved and a new start be made. Only thus did it see any guarantee that Bavaria would obtain its rightful position in the larger union now contemplated. For having once been offered by Prussia a preferential position in a reformed Federation, it expected to rank as the equal of that State in the new order of things.

So stiffnecked were the Bavarian ruler and Ministers in the early stages of the negotiations, that the King of Prussia for a time abandoned any hope of bringing in the whole of the South, only stipulating that Baden at least should be allowed to join the States of the North independently. It was only the affability of the Crown Prince, who visited Munich for the purpose of conciliating the sombre-spirited King Ludwig, already in an advanced stage of insanity, and his wavering advisers, that turned the scale.

When Bavaria finally withdrew opposition it was subject to all sorts of conditions, and to the retention of important "reserve rights" which had not been conceded to or claimed by any of the smaller States. These "reserve rights" related to the organization and command of the Bavarian army, the administration of the railways, post and telegraph, the marriage law, the laws of settlement and public relief, and the retention of certain excise duties on beer and spirits, subject to the payment to the Imperial Treasury of a proportion of their proceeds based on the *per capita* taxation of North Germany; in all these matters Bavaria was to retain her old independence. As a concession to dignity also Bavaria and the other South German States,

like Saxony before, were allowed to retain their foreign legations and to receive envoys in return, for the transaction of purely local affairs, and Bavaria in addition successfully claimed that her representatives at foreign Courts should in case of need act as deputies for the accredited representatives of the Confederation. An addition of territory at the expense of Baden, which was to be compensated in Alsace, and immunity from contribution to the cost of the imperial navy, on the curious ground that Bavaria had no sea-coast to defend, were among the demands which were refused. There was great rejoicing in Bismarck's diplomatic household when, towards the end of November, the agreement with Bavaria was signed and the reluctant kingdom was safely housed in the Confederation.

The feeling in Würtemberg, which had joined the Customs Parliament in a sullen and defiant mood, proved unexpectedly conciliatory. While the negotiations were in progress the Lower House presented an address to the King declaring its conviction that unity was "a necessity of the German nation deeply rooted in its history" and as good for Würtemberg as for Germany as a whole. Here, again, minor privileges were claimed and accorded. Würtemberg was to retain, like Bavaria, a special position in relation to military questions, there was to be no interference with the postal and railway systems, and the taxation of beer and spirits was to remain as before. Baden stipulated for the last-named concession, but otherwise, like Hesse, accepted the constitution of the existing Confederation virtually without conditions except as to the diplomatic service. Nevertheless, the important concessions made to Bavaria and Würtemberg aroused a strong feeling of resentment in those States, as well as in the larger States of the North, which had not been in a position to bargain with equal success four years before. It followed that any future proposals to modify the constitution in relation to the "reserve rights" thus conceded would be conditional upon the individual consent of the States concerned.

For the rest, the broad basis of the new union admitted of little compromise. The Confederation of North Germany was to be enlarged so as to comprise all the German States, and historical precedent pointed to their organization as an Empire. The jurisdiction of the Federal Government remained substantially as before, and the legislative and executive machinery was also the same with one

important exception. This related to the head of the Empire and to his title, a question upon which a long and bitter controversy raged. Here, again, ancient usage, confirmed by the action of the Frankfort Parliament of 1848-9, suggested the restoration of the imperial office. The King of Bavaria and still more his heir were against it, however, fearing that the more the prestige of the Empire was magnified the more would the dignity of the individual States be diminished, a view with which some other rulers cordially sympathized, though none thought it expedient to make an equally open stand. In the end King Ludwig surrendered reluctantly upon this question and his proposal that the imperial office should alternate between the Sovereigns of Prussia and Bavaria.

The King of Prussia was indifferent to the imperial title, and told his Minister that it appealed to him no more than a fancy-dress ball distinction. As, however, the title was necessary and he had to bear it, he wished it to be a real one and accordingly asked to be known as "Emperor of Germany." That title, however, suggested territorial sovereignty, and King Ludwig would not hear of it. "German Emperor" was, therefore, proposed instead. To Bismarck the distinction was one between tweedledum and tweedledee. "What is the Latin for sausage?" he asked his secretaries when they were in the midst of a debate on the subject; and when they began to dispute likewise over *farcimen* and *farcimentum*, he silenced them with "*Nescio quid mihi magis farcimentum esset*." Nevertheless, as Bavaria preferred "German Emperor" he supported it. Not so the King, who held out until the time fixed for the proclamation of the Empire, with the result that in that ceremony no reference was made to either of the alternatives, but only to "Emperor William." Nor did the King of Bavaria's objections stop here. As he could not prevent the creation of an Emperor, he did his best to restrict his powers, the King of Saxony helping him in secret, and had he had his way the office would not have been made hereditary in the Prussian royal house; he declared that if he had known that this would follow he would not have agreed to join the Empire at all.

In this final conflict between South and North the Austrian Chancellor Count Beust was believed to be doing his best to stiffen the resistance of Bavaria and Würtemberg, still cherishing the hope that if these two States kept out of the new Confederation a way might yet be

found for an alliance which would put Austria at the head of the union of the South which the Treaty of Prague seemed to contemplate.

In diplomatic negotiations Bismarck, iron-willed though he was, never shut open doors or broke his knuckles against closed ones. Seldom, if ever, did he show greater patience, sagacity, and restraint than in this critical time, when he had to reconcile the most violent antagonisms and to resist pressure from the most influential quarters urging him to break down opposition with a heavy hand. Even the enlightened and Liberal Crown Prince Frederick was in favour of simply laying down the law for the South Germans and forcing it upon them whether they liked it or not. Bismarck is responsible for the statement that now, as in 1866, the Crown Prince wished the title to be not Emperor but King of Germany. "What about the other Kings?" Bismarck asked him. "They must become Dukes again," the Crown Prince replied. "And if they do not want?" "They must be made." Altogether there was too much talk of coercion in the discussion of matters that could only be settled, if settled at all, by consent. Bismarck preferred to bend rather than break his opponents. He knew that the mere breath of force would rouse a hostility to union which would spread from the Danube to the Main, not only wrecking his present plan but perhaps undoing the work of 1867, since the adoption of high-handed measures would have justified the worst fears of Prussia's enemies. Now as ever, therefore, he followed the principle of seeking "sure advantages without disproportionately great risks." He complained contemptuously that some Prussian wiseacres in high places, who should have known better, talked as though in dealing with Bavaria Prussia was dictating to a State which had been beaten in war as in 1866, instead of negotiating with one which was now fighting by Prussia's side and whose confidence was essential to German unity.

Thus throughout all the difficult and long-drawn-out negotiations it was Bavaria which demanded the hardest terms, and Bismarck who was the conciliator. Reproached for excessive compliance, his reply was always the same: "We want no ill-humoured but a willing Bavaria." When the special convention with Bavaria was at last safely signed, he said to an associate: "The newspapers will not be satisfied with it, and the man who writes history in the usual way will be able to find fault with our agreement. He may say, 'The stupid fellow

should have asked more and he would have got it – they must have given it.' And he might be quite right with his *must*. But what is the good of treaties which people *must* conclude? It was more important to me that the negotiators should be contented with the conditions, and I know that they went away satisfied. The treaty has defects, but for that reason it is all the safer." And so in fact it proved. The opinion of Bavarians in general was that they had made a good bargain and kept all they had a reasonable right to expect, that they might have obtained still more with greater persistence, but that by not winding the screw too tightly their country had come out of the negotiations with profit and credit.

It became known later that many of Bismarck's opponents in those days of empire-building were members of his own household. Roon, the Minister of War, was supposed to be fidelity itself, yet in private letters he was at the time satirizing and belittling both the imperial title and the Empire, and so fouling the fruits of the victories which he had done so much to organize. "All the talk is of the coming of the Emperor deputation" (of the North German Diet), he wrote to his wife on December 17, 1870. "Do I rejoice at this new title? Oh, no! I believe, however, that it is an inevitable consequence of the policy which has been followed for years, and that we now can neither wonder at nor complain of it." Like the Prussian feudal Conservatives in general – for he belonged to the landed aristocracy of East Prussia – Roon was not enamoured of the Empire, fearing that it would add importance to the existing Federal Diet, with its democratic franchise and aspirations after popular sovereignty, and would diminish Prussia's status.

The attitude of Bismarck's old party at the time is faith fully reflected in a letter written to Roon by his nephew Moritz von Blanckenburg on November 8, 1870, just after the capture of Metz: "I think of the political future with melancholy. I have talked in Berlin with Itzenplitz, Eulenburg, Wagener, and a large number of Free Conservatives. Even the latter are shocked at the precipitous entrance of Hesse, Würtemberg, and Baden in the Confederation, and regard it as settled that the majority in the new Diet must be completely Laskerized (i.e. Liberalized), since it is impossible to obtain from those States any other elements." Already the Conservatives were scheming for an Upper Chamber, to consist solely of delegates of the

Governments, and Roon himself favoured the idea in private.

While thus beset at home by difficulties seen and unseen, Bismarck sought and obtained encouragement in a very unlikely quarter. The Versailles negotiations were still incomplete when he conceived the happy thought of associating Austria with the transformation in progress, hoping thereby to conciliate the South and also to soothe the susceptibilities of the Emperor's Government, which now knew that the last chance of Austria's readmission into Germany had passed away. In a letter of December 14th he informed the Cabinet in Vienna of the impending conclusion of the treaties and reminded it that this movement towards complete unity, which until recently had seemed to lay outside human probability, had proceeded "out of the history and the spirit of the German people," for which reason North Germany, not having sought it, had no right to obstruct or repel it. He assumed that Austria could have no interest in interpreting the Treaty of Prague in a way that would impede the prosperous development of the neighbouring German lands, and added: "We may confidently hope that Germany and Austria-Hungary will regard each other with feelings of mutual good-will, and join hands in promoting the joint welfare and prosperity."

Whatever his personal feelings may have been, Count Beust acknowledged this renewed bid for a fresh start in Austro- German relationships in words which left no doubt that the Emperor was weary of isolation and wanted friendship. This token of a warmer relationship between Courts and Governments but lately estranged gave great satisfaction in both coun tries, and did much to conciliate the Southern peoples. Already there were speculations as to the possibility of a formal alliance between the new Empire and the dual monarchy, established in 1867.

Only after the Sovereigns had all come into line did a deputation of the North German Diet obtain permission to wait upon the King of Prussia at Versailles in the middle of December with an invitation that he would accept the imperial title, a reminder of the Frankfort Parliament which pleased the constitutionalists. The King received the deputation affably, but took care to remind it that the offer of the crown must come from his fellow-Princes. Then the treaties were referred to the same Diet and the Diets of the States which were to enter the Confederation. They, too, had been ignored so long as the

negotiations were in progress, and their assent was asked only as a matter of form. For it is literally true that, as the German historian Lorenz writes, "the establishment of the Empire was in essence the work of diplomacy and the part played in it by Parliament had a merely decorative significance." The North German Diet created no difficulties. It approved almost unanimously the treaties under which Würtemberg, Baden and Hesse were to enter the Empire, and even endorsed the unpopular treaty with Bavaria by an overwhelming majority (195 against 32). Similarly, in spite of much criticism, the Diets of Baden, Hesse, and Würtemberg gave a cordial, and in the case of most of the Chambers virtually unanimous, acquiescence to all that had been done.

Only Bavaria still hung back. There particularism burst forth anew; the Upper Chamber agreed, but the popular House sullenly hesitated; even the Government was halting and apologetic. Defending the treaties, as his duty was, the Minister of Justice, Herr von Lutz, confessed (December 14, 1870) that though the action of the Government had been free, it had also been involuntary – free in that no direct pressure had been applied, involuntary in that the force of events and the danger of isolation made it impossible for Bavaria to stand out. "It is useless," he said, "to cling any longer to the idea of a Great Germany. You have to decide, not to choose. You must accept the treaties." For a time it seemed as though Bavaria was still determined to block the way, and so long as the treaties were not ratified in Munich the King of Prussia refused to accept the imperial crown in Versailles. The dead lock dragged on until late in January, and though the Lower Chamber then capitulated, its acceptance was unwilling and grudging. The requisite two-thirds majority was only exceeded by two votes. The minority for the most part belonged to the Clerical party. So bitter was the feeling against incorporation amongst many Bavarians at that time, however, that they abandoned their nationality and became Swiss citizens rather than enter a political union in which Prussia was bound to be supreme.

Nothing now stood in the way of the formal offer of the crown to the Emperor-expectant, and this was made in the name of the Princes by the King of Bavaria who, nevertheless, only overcame his last remaining scruples when he was told that the King of Saxony was waiting for his refusal to act as imperial sponsor. In every detail it was

a carefully negotiated arrangement. Even the letter conveying the invitation was drawn up by Bismarck and submitted to the King of Prussia beforehand, though as the imperial drama was staged it was represented as the voluntary and single-handed act of King Ludwig.

The final act was the proclamation of the Empire at Versailles, in the royal city where Louis XIV had held his brilliant court, and in the palace which had so long represented the glory of the Kings of France. The inspiring event took place on January 18th, the 170th anniversary of the creation of the Kingdom of Prussia, in the historical Hall of Mirrors (grande galerie des glaces) in the presence of the German Princes, many of their leading Ministers of State, and the most notable officers of the victorious armies; no direct representatives of the Diets or of the nation were present. In accepting the crown from his peers, the Emperor said: "We accept the imperial honour conscious of the duty of protecting with German fidelity the rights of the Empire and its members, of maintaining peace, and, supported by the united strength of the nation, of defending the independence of Germany. We accept it in the hope that it may be given to the German nation to enjoy the reward of its arduous and self-sacrificing struggles in lasting peace and within frontiers which assure to the fatherland a security against renewed French attacks which it has lacked for centuries." The outer world little suspected how lightly he took his new rank and dignity and that he had to the last struggled against such a break with the old life of Prussia.

The proclamation of the Empire was read by Bismarck, nor could it have been read with right or propriety by any other. For the Empire was his creation, and more than any other man in the brilliant circle he was entitled to share in the honours and jubilations of the hour. He had gained his end in face of enormous difficulties, had gained it by devious ways and drastic means, but therein he had only fulfilled the prophecy with which he entered Ministerial life. Unity had come not by liberty, as the idealists had wished, but by force; the German question had been settled not by Diet majorities and parliamentary speeches, but literally by blood and iron. It had needed three wars to bring the goal within reach; lives had been sacrificed by the hundred thousand, treasure wasted with prodigal hand, countries given over to devastation and ruin; but success had been won, and never did he doubt that the prize was worth the price. Now for twenty years the

history of reunited Germany was to be, practically, the record of the same man's efforts for the advancement of his country and the spread of its influence. Survey that history at any point during the period from 1870 to 1890, and the brain and hand of Bismarck will be seen at work, his and hardly any other's. In token of gratitude, his King, now Emperor, gave to his Chancellor the rank of Prince and the estate of Friedrichsruh, in the old duchy of Lauenburg, which, after having been ceded by Denmark to Prussia and Austria jointly in 1864, had passed into the hands of Prussia in the following year.

It was a great day for the Germanic races and for Europe when it could be said that Germany was no longer a fortuitous concourse of impotent sovereignties but a firm and ordered union of States protected by an army which had within four years overthrown two of the strongest of Continental Powers. The only parts of the old Federation left outside the union were Austria and the little principalities of Luxemburg and Liechtenstein. Now it was to be seen whether in the pursuits and emulations of peace the victorious cause of unity would prove to be also the cause of progress and civilization, and the Empire would, in the words of Prince Hohenlohe, one of its later Chancellors, "be an empire of freedom, as well as of prosperity and power." The first effects were not to be mistaken. Instead of becoming more European, the nation thus elevated before all the world became more German; the old cosmopolitanism, which, while a political weakness, had been one of the distinctions of disunited Germany, gradually but surely succumbed to an intensely vivid and powerful nationalism; particularism in Germany gave place to particularism in Europe and the commonwealth of nations. The significance of these changes was to be seen only at a later date.

The first Diet of the new Empire was elected on March 3rd, and met for the first time on March 21st, choosing as its President Dr. Simson, who took the office almost by prescriptive right. The first business was the amendment of the constitution of the North German Confederation in accordance with the treaties which had been concluded with the States of the South. The democrats contended that as Germany had now a new Empire she should have a new constitution as well, and they were in favour of a fundamental revision of the hurriedly drafted constitution of 1867. At heart they hoped that the Empire would be based on a more genuine

parliamentary *régime*, with a full Federal Ministry responsible to the Diet. Bismarck, on the other hand, wanted as little alteration as possible, and the majority were with him. The position and prerogatives assigned to the President of the North German Confederation in 1867 were now in substance transferred to the Emperor. The Federal Chancellor became the Imperial Chancellor, but his constitutional position and functions were unchanged. The members of the Federal Council were increased to fifty-eight, Prussia having seventeen seats as before, while Bavaria now received six, Würtemberg four, Baden three, and Hesse three. The members of the Imperial Diet were increased from 297 to 382, and later, owing to the representation assigned to Alsace and Lorraine, to 397.

Apart from the rights reserved to Bavaria and Würtemberg, as already stated, one of the most important changes, introduced as a concession to the larger States, related to the functions of the Federal Council, which was henceforth to have a Standing Committee for Foreign Affairs, consisting of five members, Bavaria, Würtemberg, and Saxony appointing one each and the Federal Council nominating the other two from year to year. Of this Committee Bavaria was given the presidency, while Prussia presided over all the other Standing Committees. It does not appear that the Foreign Affairs Committee proved a very vigorous institution. Upon one notable occasion – in 1875 – it was ignored and remained inactive at a time when the issue of peace and war trembled in the balance. For the rest, the legislative power continued to be exercised jointly by the Federal Council, as representing the Sovereigns and Governments of the States and the Diet.

Other important changes related to the consolidation of the defensive forces of the Empire. Born in war as the Empire had been, and enlarged by the incorporation of a slice of France, it was inevitable that military strength and efficiency would be the constant preoccupation of its domestic policy. The military alliances with the South, dating from 1866, had been superseded by agreements which were now embodied in the constitution. Although the Sovereigns of South Germany retained the command and control of their troops during peacetime, the organization of the federal army became uniform in all essential details, such as universal liability to military service, the obligation of the States to contribute in proportion to

population towards the peace strength, arming, formation, and command, the training of the troops, and arrangements for mobilization. The constitution fixed the peace strength of the army until the end of 1871 at 1 per cent. of the population of the Empire as enumerated in 1867, a ratio which gave a force of 401,659, a number subsequently embodied in a law having effect for the succeeding three years.

The constitution, as revised, was adopted on May 4, 1871, and but little altered it remains in force to the present day. Its main provisions may be conveniently summarized at this point, the discussion of technical questions being avoided. By the preamble the four States of the South are declared to have concluded with the King of Prussia, in the name of the North German Confederation, "an eternal alliance (*Bund*) for the protection of the federal territory and its rights, and for the promotion of the welfare of the German nation," bearing the name "German Empire."

In territorial and political composition the Empire comprises four kingdoms, six grand duchies, five duchies, seven principalities, and three Free Cities, together with the Imperial Province of Alsace-Lorraine. For the entire federal area the constitution establishes one nationality and citizenship, together with uniformity in the rights and duties deriving there from, subject to certain reservations in relation to domicile and settlement and poor-relief.

The principal questions reserved for imperial legislation and regulation are the questions of civil and political rights, migration, domicile and settlement, colonization and emigration, the passport system, insurance, customs, taxation for the purposes of the Empire, commerce, weights, measures, coinage, and the issue of paper money, the bank system, the patent laws, the protection (copyright) of intellectual property, the protection of German trade abroad, the consular service, the railway system (with reservations), maritime and internal navigation, the lighthouse system, the postal and telegraph system (subject to the reserve rights of Bavaria and Würtemberg), the army and navy (as to the former subject to special and general territorial reserve rights), medical and veterinary police surveillance, the Press and association laws, civil law, criminal law, commercial law, and judicial procedure.

The Presidency of the Confederation is a hereditary office vested in

the King of Prussia, with the title of German Emperor. Sovereignty, however, is exercised by the federal rulers collectively, as represented by the Federal Council. The legislative organs of the Empire are the Council and the Imperial Diet, and the assent of each assembly, as determined by a majority vote, is necessary to a bill becoming law. (...)

The Emperor as such cannot initiate legislation, his assent to it is not required, and he has no right of veto. He promulgates all laws, but in the name of the Empire. In the Federal Council, indeed, he can initiate measures, but only through the Prussian Government, and then he acts not in a German-imperial but in a purely Prussian capacity, and simply exercises the right possessed by every other member of the Confederation. To the Diet he cannot appeal directly at all, but only through the Federal Council or the Prussian members of the same.

In his executive capacity, however, the Emperor possesses important rights and functions. He sees to the execution of the imperial laws, represents the Empire in matters of international law, and in its name declares war and concludes peace, enters into alliances and other political treaties with foreign States, and accredits and receives ambassadors: nevertheless, the assent of the Federal Council (i.e. of all the Sovereigns) is necessary before war can be formally declared, except in the event of an attack on federal territory or coasts, while treaties affecting matters subject to legislation require the assent of both the Federal Council and the Diet. The right to convene, open, adjourn, and close the Federal Council and the Diet lies also with the Emperor, but both bodies must be convened annually and the Council must be convened on the requisition of a third of its votes. While the Federal Council may be convened without the Diet in order to prepare for the work of the session, the Diet cannot be convened separately. Without its consent the Diet may not be adjourned for more than thirty days or more than once during a session; within sixty days of the dissolution of the Diet there must be an election, and within ninety days a new Diet must meet. A resolution of the Federal Council, assented to by the Emperor, is necessary to the dissolution of the Diet before the expiration of its legal terms, as happened in 1878, 1887, 1893, and 1906.

Further, the Emperor appoints imperial officials from the

Chancellor downwards and may dismiss them at will. The organization and practically the entire management of the army and navy are his business, and he nominates all officers and officials in those services. He may also declare martial law, should public security require it.

The Federal Council consisted originally of fifty-eight members, every State having at least one seat, but since the admission of Alsace-Lorraine to representation therein in 1911 the number has been sixty-one. The Council possesses a double function, in that it is a legislative and an executive body. In the former capacity, however, it does not correspond to a First Chamber or Upper House, for its members, being the direct delegates of the Sovereigns, are not free to vote as they will, but follow the instructions of their Governments.

As a legislative organ the Federal Council is an absolute counterpoise to the elected Diet. No measure passed by the latter is valid and no resolution adopted by it is binding upon the Imperial Government until the Federal Council has signified its assent, and the same holds good of the action of the Council as against the Diet. Every member of the Council is competent to bring forward and support resolutions, and the President is obliged to allow them to be discussed. As a rule, resolutions of the Council are decided by a simple majority, the President having a casting vote. As the President is the Imperial Chancellor, and as the Chancellor is appointed by the Emperor, this means that the casting vote falls to Prussia. When, however, the Council is equally divided upon a measure relating to the army, navy, or customs and excise, the President may only decide by a casting vote in case this vote be in favour of existing arrangements. When matters not declared by the constitution to be of common imperial concern are under consideration, only the members of the State or States affected may vote. A member of the Council cannot sit in the Diet, but he has the right at any time to appear there and speak in the name of his Government, even though he be in conflict with the dominant sentiment of the Council.

The executive powers of the Federal Council are defined by article 7 of the constitution. It is the business of the Council to decide on (*a*) the proposals to be laid before the Diet, and the resolutions adopted by the Diet, and (*b*) the general administrative regulations and arrangements necessary for the execution of imperial statutes so far as

these are not provided for by law, as well as take steps to amend defects that may appear in the execution of the laws and of regulations issued for that purpose. For the more effectual discharge of its functions, the Council forms Standing Committees for the army and fortifications, maritime affairs, customs and taxation, trade and commerce, railways, post and telegraphs, justice, accounts, Alsace-Lorraine, the constitution, and procedure; and in addition there is the Special Committee for Foreign Affairs, whose constitution has already been explained. In each of these committees at least four States in addition to Prussia must be represented. Members of the Confederation who neglect to fulfil their federal duties are liable to the process of execution, which must be resolved upon by the Federal Council and carried out by the Emperor.

The political systems represented by the federal States range, in many gradations of constitutional freedom, from the republicanism of Hamburg, Bremen, or Lübeck to the semifeudalist systems of the Mecklenburgs. If, however, the constitution allows for this variety of political conditions, it leans far more to the old absolutist traditions than to modern democratic principles. The arrangements which most effectively express these principles are those of the electoral system.

The principle on which the Diet is elected has already been explained – universal (i.e. manhood), single, direct, and secret suffrage, every German citizen who has completed his twenty- fifth year having a vote in the constituency where he resides. There are, however, disqualifications – the military and the navy, both officers and men (though not officials) so long as in active service, bankrupts, also recipients of certain forms of public relief, if received during the year preceding an election, persons who have been deprived of civil rights, and those under guardianship. The second-ballot method of election is followed; unless in the first election a candidate obtains an absolute majority of all the votes given, there must be a further contest (*Stichwahl*) between the two candidates who have received the largest number of votes. The effect in a country having so many parties as Germany is often anomalous. A candidate who heads the poll at the first ballot may be defeated at the second, while his successful opponent will usually owe his return to the votes of other parties than his own, and not seldom to the support of a hostile group which has made a corresponding bargain to its own advantage

elsewhere. In the event of a tie resulting, the seat is awarded by casting lots. All elections take place on one day. The official costs of elections fall partly on the Imperial Treasury and partly on the rates.

The Empire is divided into single-member constituencies ("electoral districts"). When the electoral law of the North German Confederation was passed, the constitution of the Diet was based on the ratio of one member for every 100,000 of the population, though the smallest States – and several had only half the due numerical qualification – were given at least one seat. As there has been no redistribution of seats, the later growth of population has led to great inequality in representation. At the present time the ratio of members is one to every 170,000 of the population. The result is that some States and all the large industrial districts and towns are greatly underrepresented. Berlin, the metropolis, for example, still has six members, though on the foregoing ratio it should have twelve. In the smaller States there are constituencies not one-twelfth the size of the working-class constituencies of Berlin. All the efforts of the popular parties to redress such inequalities, however, have been opposed by the Government on the ground that any thorough-going redistribution of seats would transfer the balance of political power to the working classes, and consequently strengthen the already menacing position in the Diet of Social Democracy.

Originally the duration of the Imperial Diet was fixed at three years, but an amendment of 1888 altered the period to five years, as in the case of the Prussian Diet. Measures left uncompleted at the close of a session must again go through all stages, though in the case of an adjournment they are resumed at the stage already reached. In order to its legal constitution and to the validity of any resolution a majority of the total membership (i.e. 199) must be present, but subject to this proviso the principle of an absolute majority governs all divisions, and there is no casting vote. While no legislation can be proposed by the Government without the prior approval of the Federal Council, private members are competent to initiate bills, which the Council may, of course, refuse to accept. The sittings of the Diet are public, and faithful reports of its proceedings are privileged, as are the deputies themselves, so far as relates to utterances within the Chamber. More than once an endeavour has been made to annul these immunities, but on each occasion without the slightest chance of

success.

Until 1906 not only was there no statutory payment of members, but members of the Diet were prohibited from receiving "payment or compensation" from any source. It has been shown how the Constituent Assembly of 1867, in debating the North German constitution, contested this provision. In 1873 deputies were given free railway passes, but all attempts to introduce the principle of payment of members were frustrated during the Chancellorship of Prince Bismarck, who held unpaid membership to be an indispensable counterpoise to universal suffrage and the ballot. When in 1881 the Progressist party voted compensation of £25 per session to provincial deputies, the Government prosecuted the recipients of this gratuity and obtained a conviction, with the result that the money was declared to be forfeit to the State. The increasing difficulty of securing a quorum of the Diet led the Government of Prince Bülow to capitulate upon this question in 1906. The constitution was accordingly amended, and members have since, in virtue of a special law, been paid at the rate of £150 a year, subject to a deduction of £1 for every day of absence from a plenary sitting or failure to take part in a division taken by names.

The constitution, as already stated, knows only one Minister, the Imperial Chancellor, who can appoint his own deputy. A law of 1878, however, authorized the creation of departments of government (*Ämter*), *akin* to Ministries in the parliamentary systems of the federal States, each under a Secretary of State. These departments comprise the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office (since 1907), the Admiralty, the Treasury, the Post Office, and those for Justice, Railways, the Imperial Bank, Audit, and the Imperial Debt Commission.

Over the Chancellor, the Secretaries of State, and still less over the Federal Council or its individual members, the Diet has no authority whatever: the utmost it can do is to negative the measures or proposals brought forward by them. One provision of the constitution appears, at first sight, to give the Diet some sort of control over the action of the Chancellor, in that by countersigning all decrees and ordinances issued by the Emperor in the name of the Empire he "thereby undertakes responsibility," a condition, however, which is inapplicable to military ordinances and commands. Yet in reality the responsibility here affirmed is merely of a political, and not of a

judicial kind. The Chancellor or Secretaries of State may be interpellated, criticized, and censured, yet all parties combined cannot secure the removal of any one of them unless it be the will of the Emperor that he shall go. “If you strike out my salary,” Prince Bismarck told the Diet on December 1, 1885, “I shall simply go to law, and the Empire will be ordered to grant me my salary so long as I remain Imperial Chancellor.”

Nor can any Minister be arraigned before either the Diet or any judicial tribunal on account of acts done by him in contravention of the constitution. In this respect the constitution of the Empire marks, singularly enough, great retrogression, in point of principle, from the position adopted in the Prussian constitution of 1850, which gives to either Chamber the right to impeach Ministers for the crimes of breaking the constitution, bribery, and treason. The Supreme Court of the monarchy is supposed to decide such impeachment, though the “special law” which was to have determined the questions of “responsibility, the procedure to be adopted, and penalties” has not yet been passed. The only practical guarantee against the infraction of the constitution consists of the institution of the yearly budget, though theoretically the control which can thus be exercised over the Government is not complete. For a considerable revenue is not voted from year to year, but is permanent, and so, too, is certain expenditure. Further, the constitution allows expenditure to be voted for a longer period than a year in special cases.

The provisions which deal with the amendment of the constitution were intended to make changes difficult. Not only is legislation, implying the mutual assent of the Federal Council and the Diet, necessary, but should fourteen (out of the total of sixty-one) votes be given in the Council against any proposed alteration, it falls to the ground. As Prussia alone possesses seventeen votes, she is able, by taking advantage of the full representation on that body to which she is entitled, to veto any proposed change. Moreover, the particular rights of any of the federal States can only be modified with their consent.

The other legislation passed during the first session of the enlarged Diet related to the consolidation of the Empire, the organization of the new machinery of administration, the introduction in the newly federated States of the legislation of the North German Confederation,

provision to meet the war expenditure, arrangements for the division of imperial expenditure amongst the States, provision for the war invalids and the survivors of the fallen, the organization of the annexed (or “regained") provinces, and the disposal of the French indemnity.

After large deductions for common purposes, the balance of the French milliards was divided amongst the States on two principles – three-quarters proportionately to number of soldiers they had contributed to the war and the remaining quarter according to population. The assignments made applied to such purposes as the restoration of the ravages of war in the army and fleet; the building and strengthening of fortifications on the new western frontier, at Strassburg, Metz, Neu Breisach, and Diedenhofen; provision for the invalids and the relatives of the fallen by the endowment of an invalids’ fund of twenty-eight million pounds; compensation for the losses suffered by the shipping trade on land and sea: gifts and loans of money to returned soldiers to help them to re-establish themselves in civil life: compensation to German citizens expelled from France when the war broke out as well as to the towns and villages which had suffered during occupation by the troops; and a handsome grant to the military generals, the division of which was left to the Emperor’s discretion. In short, there was compensation of all sorts in all directions, and plenty of money wherewith to pay it. Large sums were also used in the construction and improvement of railways; the railways in the annexed provinces were acquired by the Empire for thirteen million pounds, and one and three-quarter millions more were expended on extensions and improvements. Finally, six million pounds were laid aside in a tower at Spandau, to be held in readiness for the next war.

The fate of the annexed provinces of Alsace and Lorraine excited warm controversy. What should be their status, that of free or vassal territories; should they together constitute a separate federal State; or should they now be attached to one or more of the existing States? The spokesmen of Prussia, led by the historian Treitschke, clamoured for the incorporation of the provinces in that kingdom, and the Federal Council let it be known that it would be willing to accept that solution of the difficulty. On the other hand, there was in the South a strong feeling favourable to the partition of the territories between the

adjacent Baden and Bavaria. Against all such proposals of national effacement the populations affected indignantly protested. Not only in Alsace-Lorraine, but in some foreign countries, voices were raised in favour of constituting the provinces a neutral State. It is not likely that the Government ever considered the proposal seriously, but in a speech made in the Diet on May 2, 1871, Bismarck gave the reasons which made its acceptance impossible.

"Another alternative," he said, "would have been to create a neutral State like Belgium and Switzerland. There would then have been a chain of neutral States from the Baltic Sea to the Swiss Alps, which would certainly have made it impossible for us to attack France by land, because we are accustomed to respect treaties and neutralities. France would thus have had a protective girdle against us, while we should not have been covered by sea so long as our fleet was not equal to that of France. That, however, was a secondary objection. The primary objection was that neutrality is tenable only so long as the population concerned is determined to maintain an independent and neutral position. The population of Alsace- Lorraine, however, in the event of a new Franco-German war, would have joined France again, so that neutrality would have been merely a phantom, harmful for us, but useful for France.

In the end German opinion approved Bismarck's solution, which was that territories which had been won for the Empire by the whole nation should be a common heritage, and a law was accordingly passed declaring them to be "Imperial territory" or an Imperial Province (*Reichsland*). They were not to come under the imperial constitution until January 1, 1874, but power was given to the Emperor, in conjunction with the Federal Council, to introduce the constitution in individual districts in the meantime without consulting the Diet. Bismarck at that time wished to grant to Alsace-Lorraine, by instalments, the largest measure of freedom compatible with the order of the State as a whole, and he had faith that with "patience and good-will" the French would be won over – "perhaps in a shorter time than is now expected." On behalf of the new German citizens he appealed to the nation for "German patience and German love." So far from his mind was any thought of the Prussianizing of the provinces which came into force later, that he protested against any attacks upon their individuality. "During the two hundred years they have belonged to

France," he said on May 25th, "Alsace and Lorraine have developed a considerable degree of particularism, in the good old German way, and in my opinion that is the ground upon which we must lay the foundations. It must be our duty to strengthen this particularism. The more the inhabitants of Alsace feel themselves Alsatians, the more will they cast off French influence."

On the whole, both the disposition and the intentions of the Diet, no less than of the nation, towards the annexed provinces were at that time kindly and even generous. One of the first acts of the Diet was the decision to re-establish a university at Strassburg, and when the Government proposed to govern the provinces as a Crown colony for the first two years and a half, the Diet reduced the term by a year. It was only when the new administration – Prussian to the core in composition, methods, and spirit – had been set up, that the mischief was done which later made Alsace-Lorraine so grievous a burden to the Empire.

Other projects to which the first Diet devoted itself were a programme of shipbuilding, the establishment of a naval academy at Kiel, and preparations for the construction of the North and Baltic Sea Canal. At that time Moltke opposed the last scheme, contending that the nine million pounds which it was then estimated to cost would be better employed in strengthening the navy. So, too, the coinage was reformed at great cost, a change which coincided with the adoption of the gold standard. In their desire to impose at once a Hohenzollern impress upon the entire life and organization of the Empire the Prussian Conservatives proposed to replace upon all coins the effigies of the territorial Sovereigns by that of the Emperor. Bismarck flatly refused to listen to the idea, and the coinage continued to be issued with a national stamp, as it does to the present day.

Some of the legal and judicial changes which became necessary owing to the unification of Germany, though initiated at once, entailed years of labour. A beginning had already been made by the Diet of the North German Confederation, which introduced within the allied States uniform laws relating to commerce and finance, the conditions of acquiring and of forfeiting federal and State citizenship and domicile, co-operation, and the penal law, and in 1871 these laws were applied to the entire Empire. Between 1872 and 1878 laws relating to civil and criminal procedure, bankruptcy, the constitution

of the law courts, the practice and status of advocates, judicial and legal fees, and other legal questions were passed after infinite labour, due to the necessity of conciliating the widely conflicting usage and traditions of many States, and for the most part they came into force in 1879. In the meantime it had been decided in April, 1877, after an acrimonious controversy, that the seat of the new Imperial Supreme Court of Justice should not be Berlin but Leipzig, and there it was opened two years later. Dr. Simson was appointed the first President, so crowning his unique record for Presidencies. Before this the work of codifying the civil law of Germany had been taken in hand. It was the greatest purely legal task necessitated by the new organization of Germany, and it was not until 1896, after twenty-four years of labour, that it was completed.

The early days of the second Diet witnessed one of those "Chancellor crises" which were to form so familiar a feature of imperial politics in later years. In the spring of 1874 the revision of the military law of the Empire became due. A new Diet had been elected in January, and the National Liberals had been returned in increased strength, forming in the main the Ministerial majority. Nevertheless, the controversy evoked by the question was keen and prolonged. The Government now wished to fix the peace strength of the army definitely at 401,659, without counting officers and men entitled to serve only one year in virtue of educational qualifications, until further legislation should be proposed on the subject. Both the National Liberals and the Free Conservatives regarded the number as excessive, the former proposing as an amendment 360,000, and the latter 385,000. The Progressists and democrats further demanded that the number should be fixed year by year, and contended that unless that were done the budget rights of the Diet would be of no effect. No doubt this was Bismarck's purpose. The hope of making the army and its administration more independent of parliament and its resolutions had been behind the endeavour which he made, when the constitution of the North German Confederation was being drawn up, to reserve for the Executive the right to determine expenditure, while limiting the right of the Diet to the sanctioning of taxation. Therein he had been defeated, but he had succeeded in evading the principle of annual army estimates in the North German Diet and again in the Imperial Diet in 1871 by a compromise under which the peace

strength was fixed for a given period. No one supposed, however, that the arrangement would be claimed as a precedent or would be held to justify the invasion of the Diet's constitutional rights which was now proposed.

The Government refused to submit on the question either of time or number, and a conflict, recalling that of 1862-66, seemed imminent. The outlook for the constitutional cause was not hopeful on this occasion, since a large section of the National Liberal party, while in no doubt as to the gravity of the issue involved, was prepared to sacrifice its principles rather than oppose the Government at such a time on a question of national defence and security. So divided was opinion, that in committee no counter-proposal secured a majority, and the bill was rejected.

Bismarck was ill at the time, and, deeply mortified by what was going on in the Diet, he declared to his bedside visitors that as soon as he could put pen to paper he would resign. The Chancellor's resignations had not up to then been numerous, and when he called "Wolf!" people still affected to be alarmed.

The threat was used to excellent effect throughout the country during the recess which followed the rejection of the bill. The result was that the Diet returned to work sobered and penitent; it had had its fling, and was now tractable again. The brave men who a month before had dared to say No now declared that they meant Yes, or shamefacedly said nothing at all. By way of compromise the National Liberals proposed that the peace strength should be fixed for seven years instead of for an indefinite period as the Government desired. This famous "septennate" arrangement was in principle an entire capitulation, and the stalwarts of the democratic party regarded it with the utmost dislike. The essential thing was that it gave the rebellious Ministerialists the opportunity of climbing down gracefully which they desired, and accordingly they grasped at it.

The Government, for its part, was well satisfied to make an apparent concession which was rather an improvement upon its original proposal than otherwise, for it was obvious to every thinking man that, justified by the septennate arrangement, a future Government would demand and expect an increase of the army as soon as the time expired. Accordingly, the bill, so amended, was accepted by a large majority (214 against 123), and the crisis passed

away. During the same session the *Landsturm* was reformed by another important law, which encountered little opposition. Hitherto this last reserve had been levied on somewhat arbitrary principles; now it was to form an integral part of the fighting force, and to be organized so as to include all able-bodied men liable to service between the ages of seventeen and forty-two who had not as yet been called to the army or the navy.

These first years of parliamentary life under the new Empire were for Bismarck a time of unceasing anxiety and strain. For the medley of parties with which he had to work, and out of which to form, if possible, the necessary majorities, was formidable in number and represented every variety of political sentiment. The Conservatives, the National Liberals, the Progressists or Radicals, and the Clericals or Ultramontanes represented fairly definite political tendencies, though both North and South had peculiarities of their own. Thus there was in South Germany no Conservative party corresponding to the feudalists of Prussia, for French influence and the absence of the acute social extremes which were a legacy of serfage in the North had to a large degree made its nobles and landed gentry susceptible to democratic ideas. The democrats of Würtemberg, again, proved a welcome source of vigour to their associates of Prussia, who had not recovered from the demoralizing effect of the capitulation on the constitutional question of 1866.

Around the larger groups, however, there was a fringe of minor fractions, organized on sectional or geographical lines. Most of these groups had been elected in order to voice the protests of corners of Prussia or of the new Confederation which were still unwilling to accept the new order of things. There were the Guelphs from Hanover, who had not abandoned hope of the restoration of their shattered kingdom, and still pledged fealty to its blind King. There were Hessians who similarly bore against Prussia the grudge of the disinherited. The Poles already formed a separate party in Prussian politics, and they carried their grievances into the Federal Assembly, where, during the discussion of the new constitution, they made the audacious demand that the Prussian provinces of Posen and West Prussia should not be incorporated in the Empire. The second largest of the centrifugal parties was the contingent, of deputies from Alsace-Lorraine, non-jurors, protesters, and irreconcilables, returned to assert

their attachment not to new Germany but to old France. Similarly the Danes kept alive memories of the war of 1864 and particularly of Prussia's refusal to carry out the provision of the Treaty of Prague in virtue of which the Danes of the far north of Schleswig were to have been allowed to decide by *plébiscite* whether they would be subjects of the dispossessed King of Denmark or the King of Prussia. An almost unregarded section was that of the Social Democrats, daringly vocal but as yet insignificant in number, for only two deputies had been formally returned as spokesmen of the now rapidly spreading gospel of Karl Marx.

As in the Diet of the North German Confederation, so in the Diet of the Empire, Bismarck had to rely for a majority upon the National Liberals. The feudal Conservatives were ready enough to swell the Ministerial majority when he deferred to their prejudices, but they gave him little help in the establishment and organization of an Empire which they did not want. Few of them were politically enlightened enough to recognize that even from their own interested standpoint it was expedient to identify themselves frankly with the cause of unity. To their restricted minds the only certain results of unity were that the Empire would push Prussia into the background, that an Emperor by the grace of princely election would eclipse a King by the grace of God, and that in the Imperial Parliament Conservatism could not hope to occupy the dominant position which it had enjoyed in the Prussian Diet; and at his price they wished for unity as little in 1871 as their fathers in 1848. In striking intellectual contrast to the typical slow-thinking autocrats from the knights' fees and manors of Eastern Prussian, Pomerania, and the Mecklenburgs, yet equally hostile to the Government, were the little handful of feudalists of the stamp of Blanckenburg – men of the highest character, well born and well bred, eloquent with voice and pen, well informed upon every subject except politics and statecraft, whose patriotism and loyalty were free from any shadow of interested motive. Blanckenburgs in particular was a special intimate of Bismarck, whom he admired as a man just as cordially as he hated him as a politician and despised his apparent opportunism. Thrice he was urged to accept the portfolio of Agriculture in the Prussian Ministry – once, at Bismarck's instigation, by the King himself – but he refused from motives entirely honourable: he could not go the way which Bismarck seemed to be

going.

Thus it was that in that period of constructive legislation the influence of the Conservatives in general was only harassing and retarding; they gave the Government a certain number of votes, but no moral strength, and even the votes were not always ready on critical occasions. Bismarck used to say that the Junker class never forgave him for having risen out of the mediocrity of his own order and cast off some of its most cherished political traditions. It is certain that they never forgave his advocacy of the cause of national unity, nor yet the peace which he concluded with the Prussian Lower House in 1866 over the budget question, since to them it implied a capitulation to democracy.

Here again, Roon, great though his services to unity, betrayed the obscurantism of his class directly he saw that the German Empire could be given over to the uncontrolled will of Prussia, and that Liberalism promised to be a greater power in the new Diet than it had been in the old. "Bismarck's policy of Germanization *à tout prix*," he wrote several years later (May 21, 1874), "has made my Prussian programme useless; with it one might have been able to stem the Liberal stream for a time, but it is beyond my power to contend against both." Roon united with a quite vehement personal devotion to Bismarck a strong propensity for saying nasty things about his policy, with which he oftener disagreed than agreed. So far did his distrust of Bismarck's coquetting with Liberalism go that he seems for a time to have entertained the idea that Count Harry von Arnim, at that time ambassador in Paris, would make a good second Chancellor, and the sooner the better.

The Progressists, on the opposite benches, were probably as free as a political party can hope to be from any taint of selfishness, but unhappily they contracted, under the leadership of a series of able but unpractical men, a strong tendency, fatal to success in parliamentary life, to obstinate pedantry and doctrinarianism; and devoted to the cause of unity though they were, they would rather – had the choice been forced on them – have dispensed with the Empire altogether than sacrificed to it one article of their political creed.

The National Liberals, on the other hand, not only formed the largest individual party, but more than any other group brought to the tasks of the Diet, together with sympathy and enthusiasm, the balance

and measure of the open, candid mind. In an assembly now increased to 382 members they commanded 120 seats, and thus again held the balance between the more definitely progressive and the openly reactionary parties. Combined with two small groups of Imperialists, one drawn from the Conservative left and the other from the Progressist right wing, the National Liberals formed a powerful middle party of moderate Liberalism, a fortress against which feudalism anti radicalism alike flung themselves in vain.

Such was his confidence in the patriotism of the National Liberals that Bismarck was inclined to count too surely on their support, and even to take advantage of their proved readiness to co-operate with him in the cause of the Empire. Never, however, can he be said to have carried the party in his portfolio as was the case with the feudal Conservatives when, in the course of a few years, party fortunes changed and their turn came to receive the Government's smiles and to do its will. Perhaps the cause of durable political progress would have fared better in Germany had the Chancellor been more dependent than he was upon fortuitous political combinations, and had been compelled to pay more dearly for a Liberal support which on the whole was given to him far too readily. Nevertheless, the National Liberals cannot be deprived of the credit of having helped forward the consolidation of the Empire to a degree unequalled by any other political party.

In many respects the new Diet, as it was composed during the early years of the Empire, challenged comparison worthily with the National Assembly of Frankfort, of which it was in some sort the heir and successor – in its truly representative character, its marked capacity, and, not least, the single- minded enthusiasm which most members brought to the discharge of their grave and unexampled tasks. Once more the parliament of the nation proved a faithful synopsis of all the best elements in the life and character of the German races. All the important political groups gave to parliamentary life at that time men of eminence and authority who, apart from their active cooperation in legislative work, and their special services to party organization and discipline, helped powerfully to stimulate and educate the new-born imperial spirit of the nation.

In the National Liberal ranks were found such men as Bennigsen,

Twesten, Lasker, and Schwerin-Putzar; in the Conservative parties, Blanckenburg, Bethusy-Huc, Kleist-Retzow, and Friedenthal were conspicuous; in the Progressist party, Bamberger, Waldeck, Schulze-Delitzsch, Richter, and Löwe; in the Clerical, Savigny, Mallinckrodt, Windthorst, Franckenstein, and Peter Reichensperger; while the Socialists had already powerful advocates in the persons of August Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht. Among the men who, though for the time immersed in politics, were only in a formal sense politicians, were many scholars and professors of greater fame in the less controversial walks of life – Gneist and Marquardsen the jurisconsults, Mommsen, Treitschke, and Sybel the historians – while men like Bishop Ketteler and Canon Moufang represented the social demands of the age as interpreted by the Church. Of the high standard of ability and oratory which characterized the Assembly, of which he was himself for some years a member, Sybel says, with the enthusiasm of the firsthand witness:

"The years immediately preceding and following the French war indicate a classical elevation of parliamentary activity in Germany such as was never reached before or after. The idealistic trait in German political life had found its full development through the long and fruitless struggle for German unity, then through the vehement struggle for freedom and power in the conflict-time, and finally through the enthusiasm evoked by the realization of the national idea. The ardent enthusiasm did not last long, but it bore a full measure of lasting fruit. In the sections of the nation engaged in politics it had awakened a store of intellectual powers, and in spite of individualistic tendencies it directed these into patriotic channels. The legislatures elected under such impressions comprised so large a number of highly educated, clever, and eloquent men that one might almost have doubted whether the orchestra did not contain too many soloists had they not devoted their undivided strength to the well being of the State with entire freedom from egoism and heated sectional interests. Their eloquence preserved a happy mean between the rhetorical splendour of a Burke and a Sheridan and the arid commonplace of the purely business debates of later times. Almost always the hearer had the impression that he was in the midst of an intellectual society pursuing idealistic aims."

Political life could not, of course, continue indefinitely at that high

level. The German spirit is critical, and criticism is rebellious and disruptive; and it was inevitable that the time would come when partisanship would gain a prominence in parliamentary proceedings of which the Diet in its early days gave no promise or warning. Yet the ardour and enthusiasm of the first deputies, their devotion and patriotic self-sacrifice, their ambition to spend and be spent in the service of the national cause, now carried to assured victory, tided the Empire safely through all the difficulties and dangers of the critical period of infancy and youth, and their well-wrought workmanship withstood with success and credit the test of later years.

CHURCH AND STATE, 1868-1883

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THE EMPIRE WAS NOT a year old before the Government found itself committed to a struggle with ecclesiastical authority which shook the State almost to its foundations, recalling the bitter religious feuds of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This was the struggle with the Roman Catholic Church, nominally over the province of the State and ecclesiastical jurisdiction, actually over the claim of the Papacy to establish in the new Empire an independent dominion, governed by orders issued from Rome. Prussia was the principal scene of this struggle, though the issues which it raised affected all Germany, and few of the other States were able to maintain an altogether neutral position.

As was fitting in a country over one-third of whose population owned allegiance to the Roman Church, the constitution and the laws of Prussia gave explicit recognition to the rights of the confession of the minority. The Protestant or Evangelical Church was the Church of the State and of the dynasty, yet the Roman Church enjoyed equally with it practical liberty and self-government; it shared in the State endowment of religion; and provision was made at public cost for the education of its sons and daughters on confessional lines in school, seminary, and university. The King's position as summus episcopus applied only to the Protestant confession, and though appointments made to the Roman hierarchy in the monarchy needed royal confirmation, assent came to be regarded, in course of time, as a matter of form.

Successive Sovereigns, with a tolerance in religious matters which contrasted strongly with their narrowness in political, were not only just but generous in their treatment of the Roman Church, which was allowed to do its work in its own way with little outside interference. Early in the century Prussia, though a Protestant State, had accredited a permanent envoy to the Vatican in the person of the historian Niebuhr, who had been cordially welcomed there for the sake of his scholarship. There were also personal ties between the Sovereigns and the Roman religion. The second and morganatic wife of Frederick William III was a Roman Catholic, and his son married a Bavarian Princess of the same faith. Always, too, Catholicism had had influential patrons at Court and amongst the territorial nobility of Westphalia, the Rhineland, and Silesia. Thus it came about that Frederick William IV in 1841 agreed to the creation in the Ministry for

Spiritual Affairs (i.e. Education and Public Worship) of a special department for the better consideration of questions affecting the Roman Catholics and their Church in Prussia, and the institution was formally recognized by the constitution of 1850. All the members of this department were Roman Catholics, and though originally it was not expected that they would be partisans, they gradually came to regard it as their special function to watch over the interests of the Papacy. Bismarck described them later as "a body of men in the heart of the Prussian bureaucracy who defended Roman and Polish interests against Prussia." During the entire reign of Frederick William IV the Roman Church enjoyed exceptional freedom from secular restraint; the King refrained from interference with the appointment of the clergy, he left the bishops alone, and he refused to tolerate any restrictions upon the religious orders.

That was the state of things when William I came to the throne in 1861, bringing into action new advisers, new principles, and new purposes. In his first speech to his Ministers as Regent in 1858 he had said: "The Catholic Church must be secured in its constitutional rights, but any overstepping of these rights must be resisted," a guarded utterance which seemed to indicate apprehension of coming friction. It was not long before it was seen that a clearer demarcation of the provinces of State and Church was, in fact, intended, and that Cæsar was determined for the future to claim every whit of authority that belonged to him of right. The new spirit was the more irksome to the Roman Church, since it had come to regard State control as a fiction.

When the relationships of State and Church first became strained, however, the immediate causes came from outside. A sequence of unlooked-for events had deprived the Pope of his traditional allies and threatened his temporal sovereignty with extinction. The military defeat of Austria had been a severe blow to the Papacy, for it meant not only the weakening of a State which had for a long time been its chief support, but the rise into prominence of the rival Protestant Power. So closely identified had been Austria and Rome that in 1866 the confident belief prevailed amongst Austrian Clericals that no Prussian soldier who was a true son of the Church would turn his rifle against the forces of so faithful a protector of Catholicism as the Emperor Francis Joseph. Spain, given up to revolutions, had ceased to count as a reliable buttress of the ancient faith. In Italy the national

movement had overwhelmed the Pope's temporal dominion, which was now confined to a small corner of the peninsula, and even here his sovereignty was nominal. To trust any longer to France was to lean on a broken reed, for Napoleon, with every desire to be regarded as the special patron and protector of the Papacy, had an increasing crop of difficulties of his own to face. Moreover, French help had been less cordially welcomed by the Pope since the Emperor had shown decided leanings towards Liberalism, upon which he seemed already to have decided to stake the future of his Government and dynasty.

Doomed to growing isolation, pressed on all sides, menaced by enemies and deserted by friends, the Papacy fell back upon itself and decided to rely upon its own inherent resources for the support which was not to be obtained from without. True to its strongest instincts, yet contradicting its own professions, it was to the rock of spiritual authority and not to the shifting sands of temporal power that the Papacy now looked for a sure foothold in a time of danger. By the firmer assertion of his spiritual dominion the Pope, the aged Plus IX, hoped to compensate, and more than compensate, for the loss of his worldly allies.

This was the origin of the papal bull of June 29, 1868, summoning an (Ecumenical Council to meet at Rome on December 8th of the following year. The citation stated that the Council was intended to discuss "everything which in these troublous times affects the greater honour of God, the inviolate purity of the faith, the eternal salvation of men, the wholesome and thorough education of the secular and monastic clergy, the improvement of morals, the Christian instruction of youth, the common peace, and the concord of all." Its efforts were particularly to be directed towards the removal of "evils and errors" of all kinds, and the promotion of "piety, honour, integrity, justice, love and all Christian virtues, for the utmost blessing of human society." No formal programme was published, but the Jesuits were early at work, eager to use the Council in the service of their extreme tenets, and long before the first meeting it was known that a determined attempt would be made to secure the uncompromising restatement of Roman Catholic dogma and of its claims in regard not merely to matters of faith and morals, but to public affairs and State action.

In the Encyclical *Quanta Cura* of December 8, 1864, the Pope had issued a Syllabus of Errors, in which the more dangerous of modern

heresies in religion, science, and social life, as understood by Rome, were condemned, e.g. religious liberty, Liberalism, the current tendencies in philosophy, freedom of the Press, lay instruction of children, and the claim of the State to exercise supervision over the Church. It was a general declaration of war against modern thought and the political tendencies then in the ascendant. The Syllabus was now to be republished. in a more emphatic form, reinforced by the promulgation of a dogma new in the history of the Roman Church, the infallibility. of the holder of the Sacred See. Rome, with its eagle vision, incomparable in its clearness and wide survey, saw that what the modern world, rebelling against restraint, needed was not less but more authority, and that in the assertion of authority lay the secret not only of its special advantage over all other religious systems, but of its perennial power. Fortified by this dogma, the vicegerent of God would meet the aggressive movements of a restless age by pointing to the stability and certitude of the unchanging Church, and would win back into the sure ways of faith a generation which trusted more and more to the broken lights of science, philosophy, and free-thought. Above all, his own flock should have security against the enemies of its peace – the security of a "garden walled around" against the insidious intrusions of the world and its intellectual allures.

Without waiting until the Council met, Prince Hohenlohe, then Minister-President of Bavaria, though a devout Roman Catholic, invited the Powers (April 9, 1869) to confer and, if possible, agree upon some common course of action in view of contingencies. Before taking this action Hohenlohe had received from the Munich professor of theology Dr. Ignaz Döllinger the assurance that the episcopacy would be behind him. It was then confidently believed in reflective Catholic circles that the effect of the plot brewing in the Vatican would be to split up the Roman Church into a multitude of autonomous national churches, so realizing Napoleon's gibe or prophecy of "a Europe with twenty popes, every country with its own." Both France and Austria declined to move, on the ground that it was not expedient to anticipate troubles which might not occur. The French Government had, indeed, warned the Vatican that if the dogma were proclaimed the French troops doing service for it in Rome would be withdrawn, whereupon the Papal Foreign Secretary, Cardinal Antonelli, had given the assurance that the dogma had a

purely theological significance and bore no relation to secular concerns.

Prussia was disposed to join in any organized action which promised useful results, but equally unwilling to be drawn prematurely into an open conflict. In a letter of instructions which he had sent in March to the German ambassador at the Papal Court, Count Harry von Arnim, Bismarck had said: “How far the bishops are willing or able to go in the maintenance of their rights must be left to their own consciences; all that they can claim is action in the ecclesiastical sphere; the action of the State can only begin when consequences are to be anticipated in the temporal sphere. By premature intervention we should confuse people’s consciences and make difficult the position of the bishops themselves.” He therefore promptly rejected a proposal made by Arnim that Germany should claim to be directly represented at the coming Council by one or more special envoys or oratores, and should protest through them against all resolutions which seemed to infringe the rights of the State. He objected to the first of these suggestions on the ground that a Roman Catholic Council would certainly refuse to accept representatives of Protestant Governments, even if it were expedient to offer them, and to the second because protests of the kind contemplated would be futile unless those who made them were in a position to follow their words by acts. Nevertheless, speaking for Prussia, he let it be understood that while the Roman Church possessed and would continue to possess complete freedom in spiritual matters, any invasion of the sphere of the State would be resolutely repelled.

Bismarck’s attitude was thus one of vigilance. He had no desire to enter into a quarrel, but he was determined to resist any attempt to disturb Germany’s domestic peace, and perfectly clear in his own mind as to the conditions which would call for and justify interference. As the months passed by his confidence gave place to apprehension. Recognizing at length that if the German States had to act at all it would be wise to act together, he conferred with the Governments of the South with a view to the adoption of concerted measures should the Papacy wilfully tempt reprisals, and in the meantime everything that foresight could suggest was done to warn the leaders of the Church both in Rome and in Germany, and particularly the German bishops, of the danger of yielding to Jesuit

pressure. The Prussian Ministry of Public Worship had in August, as Bismarck wrote at the time, "taken pains to exercise a preventive but confidential influence on our bishops."

Before the summer was over, however, he had come to the conclusion, as he wrote on August 11th to Prince Hohenlohe, that the extremists around the Pope were deliberately plotting to "disturb the ecclesiastical and political peace of Europe in the fanatical conviction that the universal troubles which would be caused by dissensions would strengthen the prestige of the Church, basing their expectation on the experiences of 1848, and the psychological fact that suffering men seek dependence on the Church more zealously than those who look to earthly satisfactions." "Without doubt," he added, "we have in our parliamentary legislation, in North Germany at least, an effective weapon wherewith to meet unjustifiable aggression by the spiritual power. But it is certainly better that we should not be compelled to use it, and I shall therefore regard it as a blessing, as well for the spiritual as for the temporal authorities, if a conflict between the two can be prevented by the warnings and precautions to which we have resorted." Above all things he was determined that if there was to be a fight it should not be in Rome, but in Germany, where he felt sure of his ground. "To do battle over Roman Catholic dogmas on Roman soil," he wrote to Heinrich Abeken later, "would be for us like attacking the leviathan in the water; let it come to land, that is, let the dogma take shape in practical religion, within the sphere of Prussian legislation, and we shall then be masters."

Up to this point there was no sign in Germany that the promulgation of the dogma of infallibility would meet with sympathetic response from either Roman Catholic clergy or laity. All the tokens pointed rather to a revolt against a step which seemed to revive the intellectual tyranny of the Middle Ages. Not only did a large section of the laity view with alarm the certain conflict between fidelity to the Church and loyalty to the State into which it would be plunged were the Papacy to attempt to invade the sphere of public and political action, but many of the more enlightened of the clergy, and even of the bishops, entertained the gravest misgivings and apprehensions on the subject. In the diocese of Cleves a powerful counter-movement was organized in the form of a collective address to the diocesan. At several of the seats of learning Roman Catholic

theologians and other professors conferred, and gave clear warning that the assent of scholarship could not be relied on. On September 6th, alarmed by the growing restlessness amongst their flocks, the bishops with one accord assembled at Fulda, the scene of the labours and the custodian of the remains of St. Boniface, the apostle of the Germans, and hence the Mecca, of Roman Catholic Germany, and there drew up a pastoral intended to allay fear and turn away suspicion. Never, they said, could a Papal Council promulgate any "new dogmas which are not contained in the revelation of God and the tradition of the Church, and advance principles injurious to the interest of Christianity and the Church or incompatible with the justifiable claims of the State, civilization, and science, and the legitimate freedom and the temporal well-being of the nations." The assurance was well intended, but it did not go far, for the German bishops could not pretend to speak for the Roman hierarchy as a whole.

The Council had not long been opened before the worst fears of the party of moderation within the Church were realized. On January 3, 1870, a petition bearing the signatures of 369 members called for the promulgation of the dogma. Now Bismarck thought it time to move, and to move vigorously. Two days later he directed Arnim to try to unite the German and Austrian bishops in resistance to so fateful a step before it was too late, and at the end of the month these prelates did, in fact, issue a formal memorial against the dogma as one "lacking authority in divine revelation or the authentic tradition of the Church." This protest they followed by an endeavour to prevent the discussion of the dogma in the Council. An overwhelming majority was against them, however, and the more they protested the more the extremists called for unconditional acceptance. A division was taken in the general congregation on July 13th, when of 601 bishops who took part (out of 692 present in Rome) 451 voted unconditionally and 62 conditionally for the promulgation of the dogma, 88 voted against it, while 91 were absent. Nearly all the German bishops voted with the dissentients. When the final vote was taken at the public sitting of the Council on July 18th all the dissentients with two exceptions stayed away; they had, in fact, returned home the previous day, after having served on the Pope a dignified protest.

On consecutive days two of the most momentous issues in the

history of modern Europe were cast upon the knees of the gods. On July 17th France had challenged Germany to military combat; on the next day Germany was committed by the declaration of papal infallibility to an equally vehement struggle with the strongest Church in Christendom.

For the present, however, there was no outward breach of peaceful relationships with Rome. Towards the end of the year the Archbishop of Posen, Count Ledochowski (afterwards Cardinal), even waited on the King of Prussia and Bismarck at Versailles in order to ask German support for the restoration to the Pope of the temporal sovereignty in which he had been supplanted by Victor Emmanuel in September. Although no promise could be given, the reception of the papal envoy was cordial and considerate. Moreover, when in the following March the Empire was established, the Pope was amongst the first of the potentates of Europe to send his congratulations.

Meanwhile, warned by Bismarck's repeated declarations that, greatly though he preferred peace, he was quite prepared to fight the Papacy if challenged, the Clericals prepared for eventualities by organizing their forces. They had already had separate representation in the Diets both of the North German Confederation and Prussia, though it bore as yet no due relation to the extent of the Roman Catholic population. Now they joined hands, and subordinating every consideration, national and personal, to the interests of their faith, agreed to impose upon themselves the most rigid discipline hitherto known in party warfare. Everywhere Roman Catholics were bidden to think and act confessionally upon all political questions, and they did. In November, 1870, the elections to the Prussian Diet gave the party of the Centre, as the Clericals were called, fifty-four seats, and in the first elections to the Imperial Diet in the following March they captured sixty-three, chiefly in Bavaria and the Western and Polish provinces of Prussia.

In the creation and perfecting of this new weapon of Ultramontanism there were brought into play all the resources of an ecclesiastical system than which none was ever more resourceful in its methods or used its methods with greater effect. Platform, pulpit, and Press – a special party organ was established in January, 1871, with the name *Germania* – were used with immediate success. Fortune also gave to the party a born organizer and leader in the person of Dr.

Ludwig Windthorst. Windthorst had been a Hanoverian Minister of State, and hence he brought to his task, both as party organizer and as opponent of the Government, a double devotion, as a convinced adherent of the Clerical cause and as the spokesman of an annexed country, part of which still clung to its dynastic traditions and cherished hopes of the ultimate restoration of its independence. As a parliamentary speaker he was unequalled in his time, and his incisive eloquence added quite as much heat as light to the debates of the Diets of Prussia and the Empire. Bismarck, who feared him as a controversialist, once said of his fiery oratory that "The oil of his words is not of the kind that heals, but that feeds the flames of anger," and he was compelled to admit that the Centre was the only party which had "not been incapably led." Emphatically he was a man whom it was more desirable to count as a friend than an enemy.

Windthorst declared that his party "was not at all confessional," and formally he was right, to the extent that a confessional basis was not publicly avowed, and that no one was required to display a confessional label. In fact, however, the Centre party was composed exclusively of Roman Catholics, and was homogeneous only in its confessional basis, for it included Hanoverian autonomists or Guelphs, Conservatives and anti- Prussians from Bavaria, Poles, irreconcilable Alsace-Lorrainers, and even a handful of democrats who put their Church before their political principles. Apart from questions of religion it inclined in the main towards a progressive form of Conservatism, showing special concern for the interests of agriculture, though here, again, favouring the small farmers and peasant proprietors rather than the large owners.

Bismarck, who saw through the Ultramontane pretence of non-confessional propagandism, professed to regard it as "a monstrous phenomenon in political life" that a whole Church should be converted into a political party, and he pictured the chaos of German national life if all religious communities were to follow this example. It was, however, less the party's confessional basis than fear of its opposition that troubled him. "When I returned from France," he said once in the Prussian Lower House (January 30, 1872), "I could not but regard the formation of this party as in the light of a mobilization against the State, and I asked myself, Will this contentious corps be allied to the Government – will it help the Government or attack it?"

That was where Bismarck's scruples really came in; a Roman Catholic party pledged to support the Government would hardly have been objectionable. In reality the sin committed by the Roman Catholics, in thus constituting themselves a separate political force, was that they both represented confessional interests and frankly followed them, while the rest of the Protestants, though divided into many groups, followed confessional interests with equal consistency, but without open avowal. If, therefore, in the struggle which followed Bismarck showed himself to be intolerant, his intolerance was not of the religious order. The strife of confessions as such, like the strife of political parties, left him unmoved so long as the interests of the State were not involved. He was said to have seriously discussed, several years before, the idea of offering the Pope a safe place of refuge in Germany when his temporal friends appeared to be forsaking him, and, however unlikely the idea sounds, there is no reason to doubt that he would have done it if it could have been shown to be in the political interest of the State.

In those days there were many optimistic politicians in the other camps who smiled at the menace of Ultramontanism in German party life, convinced that the confessional basis of the Centre would prove accidental and transient, and that directly the unrest caused by the Vatican Council had disappeared the new organization would be disbanded, or at least would become a normal political party, occupying usefully a moderating influence midway between Conservatism and Liberalism. Few people, if any, suspected that it would one day gain and for years retain a dominating position in parliamentary life, and that successive Governments and Chancellors would be constrained to sue for its support and wait upon its behests.

It was the organization of Roman Catholicism for political purposes that determined Bismarck to do battle without quarter against the Papacy. In this determination he followed one of those sudden intuitions which often guided him aright, yet also often led him into irremediable mistakes. His Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Herr von Thile, told Mr. Odo Russell in 1872 that the Chancellor's decision to fight the Church was so sudden that those around him "could mark the day and hour of the change that came over him like an inspiration." Little did he think that a struggle entered upon so impetuously would prove either so long or so arduous

as it did.

What has been said is a sufficient refutation of the idea propagated by some German historians that the restatement of the dogmas of the Roman Catholic Church in 1870 was directly aimed at. Germany and particularly at Prussia, and was the Pope's way of avenging the defeat inflicted upon the most Catholic Austrian Emperor at Sadowa. In the event the declaration of the Papacy affected Prussia in a special manner, but only because of the unnatural relationship between State and Church which was part of the Prussian political system and because Prussian statesmanship went out of its way to invite a quarrel, and when the quarrel began chose to fight with the worst possible weapons.

Bismarck used to say that for him the signal for active hostilities was given when in the first session of the Imperial Diet the Centre party attacked the Government for refusing to be drawn into delicate and dangerous controversies likely to endanger the concord and even the cohesion of the newly formed Empire. In the speech from the throne with which the Diet was opened on March 21st the Emperor made the significant statement that the Government had no intention to interfere in the affairs of other States.

Gratifying as the declaration was to the rest of the House, as an assurance that the policy of the new Empire was to be one of peace, it was received with disappointment by the Ultramontanes, as an intimation that Germany was not disposed to assist in the restoration of the Pope to the temporal dominion from which he had been dislodged by violent hands. Bishop von Ketteler, the one episcopal member of the Diet, protested against this doctrine of non-intervention as wrong in theory and unjust in practice. "Hitherto," he said, "it has been regarded as a Christian duty to help a neighbour when his house was in flames," and after drawing the moral, he added: "We do not want to see the Emperor and Pope in antagonism, but united." The great majority of the House agreed with the Government, however, and the address to the Crown, which was adopted by 243 votes against 63, warmly endorsed a policy of abstention, and expressed the hope that "the day of interference in the life of other nations would never occur again under any pretext or in any form."

Bismarck observed with satisfaction the resolute attitude of the

Diet, while for the present keeping silence. In his reply to the address the Emperor thanked the Diet for having "perfectly understood my words." It was a second declaration that the Government was determined not to parley with the influences which were conspiring to force upon Germany the undesirable *rôle* of the Pope's advocate and protector.

During the debate on the second reading of the constitution in April the Diet came back to the question. The Centre had proposed to introduce "fundamental rights" similar to those embodied in the Prussian constitution, e.g. freedom of opinion, the prohibition of any future censorship, free right of public meeting and of association for religious as well as other bodies, and above all the "right of the Roman Catholic Church to manage its affairs independently." The historian Treitschke was one of the deputies who vigorously opposed the proposal as outdoing the Frankfort Parliament of 1848. He asserted his favourite doctrine that the State was the sole fountain of right, power, and authority, and that its prerogatives could not be devolved to churches or parties or individuals, for that were to set up rivals to its own throne. "If the Catholic Church," he said, "is to be given the right to regulate its own affairs, that right will put in the hands of any bishop in a small State with a Catholic population a powerful weapon of opposition to the Government." To this challenge Bishop Ketteler replied: "The deputy von Treitschke has begged you not to vote for laws which would make the bishops rebels against the laws of the land. But I will show you a way of avoiding such a danger: do not vote for laws which rebel against the laws of God, then we shall never rebel against the laws of the State."

Much passionate and futile polemic was expended upon this subject of divine laws and State laws and their respective claims by lay theologians who seemed unconscious that they were bandying phrases which every man interpreted in his own way, and no two men alike. Again the Government refrained from taking part in the debate, for the Diet was doing its work well enough without interference. In the division, Athanasius had again the world against him: for the Clerical proposal was rejected by all the other parties by a vote of 223 against a Clerical phalanx of 54. Nevertheless, its authors were still undismayed. Before long they returned to the attack with redoubled energy, undeterred even by the fact that Cardinal Antonelli, ever

eager for peace, had just been induced to disapprove of the formation of a Roman Catholic political party in the Diet.

The resistance of the German prelates to the papal decree had not lasted long. Within a month all had meekly surrendered, bowed the head, and accepted the yoke; Rome had spoken, and for them the issue was decided. Thereafter no body of men showed a greater zeal in fighting the Pope's battles and defending the unpopular dogma against an unbelieving generation than the recanting German bishops.

A preliminary skirmish with the civil power took place in Prussia before the close of the year. In December the Archbishop of Cologne called on the theological professors of Bonn University to declare their acceptance of the dogma on pain of being forbidden to lecture to Roman Catholic students or to exercise priestly functions. The senate of the university complained of this act to the Minister of Public Worship, Herr von Mühler, who promptly reminded the professors concerned that they received their offices from the Government and in that capacity were responsible to it alone. On the same ground the Minister in the following month supported the action of a number of teachers of a Roman Catholic higher school at Breslau in refusing to recant their declarations against the dogma at the bidding of their bishop. Other teachers in Roman Catholic districts, who had been coerced or threatened by their ecclesiastical superiors, were similarly reassured by the reminder that their removal, like their appointment, was the right of the State and not of the Church. The tension entered a more serious phase when in the following April the Bishop of Ermeland threatened to excommunicate all teachers who refused to capitulate to episcopal authority in a matter which was altogether one of intellectual honesty.

The Government replied by abolishing the Roman Catholic Department for Spiritual Affairs (July 8, 1871), a measure of retaliation but also of precaution, a sign that the State intended for the future to be master in its own house. At the same time it publicly declared that though it had offered no opposition to the acceptance of the dogma by bishop, priest, or teacher, it was determined to resist all attempts to force acceptance upon unwilling members of the Church and to protect the victims of coercion in any form. When the bishops protested that the effect of this declaration was to subvert episcopal authority, the Government answered that the prelates might

excommunicate as they like, but they must remember that excommunication was a purely ecclesiastical proceeding and that excommunicated teachers were none the less, in the eyes of the Government, as much members of the Roman Catholic Church as before, and had forfeited none of their civil rights.

Already the action of the Government had divided the nation into two parties, the friends and the enemies of the State; in other words, of the Government and the political theories which it represented. Such a cleavage had the advantage that it cleared the air; it showed the Roman Catholics absolutely united, the laity with the clergy, the clergy with the prelacy, the prelacy with the Holy See. Already it was recognized that this was really a struggle between two absolutisms, a political and an ecclesiastical, equally rigid, equally tenacious of their rights.

Hitherto the isolated excesses of the ecclesiastics had been resisted by the aid of existing powers, but these had already proved inadequate. The first exceptional legislation adopted, however, was Imperial and not Prussian. This legislation was directed against the prelates and priests who were systematically using the security of their church walls for a violent agitation which outside would have been promptly checked as illegal. A law passed in December, 1871, made “abuse of the pulpit” (*Katheder*) an offence punishable by imprisonment for a maximum term of two years. The only opposition came from the Clericals, reinforced by a handful of Radicals whose love of liberty was stronger than their dislike of the Papacy and its pretensions.

A little later a step was taken which it was believed might conciliate the Holy See and pave the way for peace at home. In April, 1872, Cardinal Hohenlohe, a brother of the Bavarian statesman, was nominated as Germany’s representative at the Vatican. Far from regarding the nomination as an olive- branch, however, the Pope received it as a shrewd attempt to use against him one of the princes of the Church. The Cardinal had the reputation of being much more German than Roman Catholic in sympathies, and his relation to the head of the Bavarian Ministry, who had taken the lead in mobilizing the European Governments against the Papacy, did not increase his acceptability. Nor was the appointment commended by the fact that it had been publicly announced before approval had been signified by

the Vatican. Great was the chagrin in Berlin, therefore, when the Pope informed the German Government through Cardinal Antonelli that in existing circumstances he did not regard as expedient the nomination of a Cardinal to an office so delicate. The Ministerial party in the Diet was indignant at the affront, its Press wrathful and abusive. When, however, Bennigsen declared that so ostentatious a rejection of the hand of peace was an unexampled insult to the head of the Empire, Dr. Windthorst retorted that what was without precedent was the idea of making a politician out of a prelate, and of placing a man who by his office was attached to the inner councils of the Roman Church in a position in which he would be required to serve two masters. "What would you say," he pertinently asked, "if the Pope wished to make the Emperor's adjutant-general his ambassador in Berlin?"

It was in the course of a debate in the Diet upon this question that Bismarck, spurred to defiance by the encouragements of an almost united assembly, used the famous words, which were not to return to him void, "Have no fear – to Canossa we shall not go, either in body or spirit" (May 14, 1872), recalling the abject submission of Emperor Henry IV to Pope Gregory in that historic spot in 1077. Protestant Germany was jubilant, and inscribed the brave words upon many tablets in its public places.

The next step taken by the Imperial Government in the campaign of repression was aimed at a specially insidious centre of disaffection. From the beginning of the quarrel the conviction had been strengthening in Germany that the Jesuits and their propagandism were the source of all the trouble. This conviction led to a widespread demand for a clean sweep of Jesuitism, its organizations, and its institutions from Germany, and petitions rained upon the Government and the Diet to this effect from all parts of the country. It was stated that of Jesuits of foreign nationality alone there were eight hundred in the Empire at that time. The clamour for the expulsion of the Jesuits had been answered by the Roman prelacy and clergy with an impressive protest against any interference with the existing liberties of the religious orders. The strength of the representations for and against led the Government to refer the question to a special committee whose report – the handiwork of the jurisconsult Rudolf von Gneist – took the form of an elaborate treatise on the history, teaching, objects, and influence of the Society of Jesus. Proceeding

from the standpoint of German penology, according to which the treatment proper to undesirable citizens is to pass them on to other countries without so much as asking permission, it was not difficult for Gneist to prove his thesis, viz. that a law should be promptly prepared and enacted forbidding the settlement in Germany of members of this organization and of the congregations affiliated to it unless the legislation of the State concerned expressly allowed it. The report was accepted by the Diet by a vote of two to one, and again most of the members of the popular parties voted solidly with the Conservatives.

As the session was far advanced, the Government proposed a short emergency bill to meet urgent cases, and promised to deal fully with the question in the autumn. The Diet was not in a mood for half-measures, however, and it insisted upon immediate legislation. Accordingly, a bill of three clauses was soon produced, providing that members of the Society of Jesus and the kindred congregations might – which in practice meant should – be expelled from any part of the federal territory, even though they possessed citizen rights. The duty of expulsion was entrusted to the police authority. It was in vain that the speakers of the Centre appealed for a spirit of moderation, and, conscious of the powerful moral force behind them, warned the Government that they were entering upon a struggle in which they could not possibly prove victorious. They spoke to deaf ears, for the idea of force had become an obsession. The bill passed through all its stages in a week, and received the assent of the Federal Council on June 25th. The new powers were at once rigorously enforced; the Jesuit organizations were dissolved, the Jesuits themselves expelled, and fervent patriots cried “Good riddance!” and thought all trouble was now at an end. It was not so, however, for the disappearance of the Order of Jesus only brought to light the existence of other Roman Catholic orders and societies more or less similar to it in character and aims. Until further imperial legislation was possible, therefore, some of the Governments refused to allow either monks or nuns to teach any longer in the schools of their own faith.

At that time there seemed no extreme of coercion to which the excited Protestants were not prepared to go. Germany had just won unity at the cost of a bloody war, and they were not disposed to parley with any party which threatened to weaken the cohesion so

laboriously achieved. Forgetting that more than one-third of the population was Roman Catholic, and that the Roman Catholics had borne their full share in the struggle just completed, the adherents of the ascendancy confession raised the cry "No quarter for the Papist faction!" and gave the Government *carte blanche* to assert the supremacy of the State by stern and expeditious measures. There were hot-heads who even contended that just as the Prussian Government had a right to approve the election of bishops presented by the Roman Church, so the Imperial Government should be entitled to approve of the election of Popes. Invited to state his opinion on the question, Bismarck said (June 9, 1873) that the Government would refrain from interference of the kind. Nevertheless, a year before (May 14, 1872) he had issued to the German ambassadors secret instructions to use their influence with the Governments to which they were accredited in favour of joint action with a view to this very object.

In that time of abnormal and excited humours many of the Government's staunchest supporters were found in the ranks of the Radical party, whose whole history had been a protest against Governments which overrode constitutional rights and trampled down parliamentary minorities. Warned by the Clericals that as they had suffered in the past so their turn to face the rod might come again, they scoffed incredulously. "There must be created for a time a Ministerial dictatorship!" said a leading deputy of the Prussian Diet, Professor Rudolf Virchow, a man who during all his public life had been fighting dictatorship in the name of Liberalism and freedom. It was a phrase used by Virchow which stamped this conflict between State and Church with the name under which it has gone down to history. "The contest," he said, "has taken the character of a great cultural struggle" (*Kulturkampf*). In no constitutional country is the tyranny of catchwords so great as in Germany. Had not the struggle been consecrated by that unhappy phrase, it is possible that it might not have appealed to the nation with the overwhelming force it did or have been waged in so bitter a spirit.

The Vatican was not indifferent to the storm which was now so furiously raging in the North. So long as the German prelates and clergy appeared to be holding their own the Pope refrained from open interference. With the passing of exceptional laws, however, he broke silence. In an address to a deputation of German pilgrims he said of

Bismarck, on June 24, 1872: “The first Minister of a powerful Government, after victorious exploits in the battlefield, has put himself at the head of this persecution. I have told him that a triumph without moderation cannot be of long duration, and that a triumph in a struggle against truth and the Church is the greatest of follies. Who knows,” he said in conclusion, “whether the little stone may not soon be loosened from above which will shatter the foot of the Colossus?”

While the Imperial Government was thus vigorously applying coercion in the Empire at large the Governments of some of the leading States were following its example within their own territories. In Prussia a beginning was made in December, 1871, with the introduction of a bill to remove the schools altogether from clerical control. It was ostensibly directed towards the discouragement of the Polish movement in Silesia and West Prussia, but it was intended to strike a blow at Clericalism throughout the kingdom generally. It affirmed that the supreme supervision of all public and private schools belonged exclusively to the State, reserved to the State the sole right to nominate and remove the local and district school inspectors, and in effect aimed at depriving the clergy of all confessions and churches of any influence, other than that expressly delegated to them by the State, in the schools of the people. Bismarck euphemistically described the object of the bill as simply to compel Prussian subjects who had not hitherto spoken German to learn to use that language. The inclusion of the State clergy in a general prohibition was designed to avoid the appearance of exceptional legislation, but it aroused such vehement resentment amongst the feudal Conservatives in the Upper House that the bill had for a time to be withdrawn.

Before it was reintroduced a change was made in the Ministry of Public Worship, which prepared the way for a more systematic and resolute policy of repression. Herr von Mühler, who had held the office hitherto, was an uninspired administrator of somewhat wooden mind, one of those safe public officials who are warranted to walk in the straight ways of mediocrity, to make no mistakes due to courage, and to be guiltless of accessibility to new ideas. He was not the man to grasp novel situations with a strong hand, and above all he was not a political fighter, and it was a sturdy combatant that Bismarck needed by his side in the task which he had undertaken. So little enamoured of coercion was Mühler, that in the Council of Ministers he had

opposed the introduction of the School Inspection Law, though it was his duty to expound and defend it in the Diet. His wavering and ambiguous attitude and his general inability to rise to the occasion had won for him general distrust, and in January, 1872, the opposition against him took the form of a vote of no-confidence so unmistakable that he at once resigned.

His successor was ready in the person of Dr. Falk, an old parliamentarian free from strong party ties, a man of marked capacity, uniting with a practical mind a wide knowledge of affairs and great strength of purpose. Avowedly he took office with the one object of asserting the rights of the State as against the new claims of the Roman Church. "I shall never impede the full and free movement of the Church and the ecclesiastical organizations," he said (January 30th), "but where it is necessary to protect the rights of the State against these organizations I shall resolutely repel all unjustifiable pretensions." There was no mistaking the spirit and the intentions which lay behind this declaration: a new policy was impending – the policy of "Thorough." In order to prevent misunderstanding, Bismarck added in the same debate that he was in complete agreement with his new colleague.

Falk's first move was to take up the School Inspection Bill again, and see what he could make of it. Reintroducing it in an amended form, he had the satisfaction of seeing it accepted on first reading by the House of Deputies. In the House of Lords the Evangelical Conservatives were still as much opposed to it as the Ultramontanes were in the Chamber below, and once again its fate for a time hung in the balance. Deserted by his friends, Bismarck lost patience. Adjuring the pillars of State and society in the select assembly to "occupy themselves with realities, and to show now the confidence in the Government which they had shown in the past," he ended with a threat that even were a wholesale creation of peers necessary in order to carry the bill, he would not hesitate to create them. The warning proved sufficient: the cave which had been forming collapsed, and the bill became law. Put into operation the law did not prove nearly so revolutionary as had been feared. Most of the school inspectors of both confessions remained in office, though State inspectors were appointed in the Polish districts.

How badly Bismarck took the defection of the Conservatives

appears from letters of the period. Disaffection had been brewing even before the Empire, which the feudalists did not want, became a certainty, and with its establishment it became a slumbering revolt. Moritz von Blanckenburg wrote to his uncle, the Minister Roon, as early as January, 1870: “The opposition of the Conservatives against Bismarck is making rapid progress; one might even call it embitterment.” Roon replied to this letter: “Politically I, too, belong to the Conservative Opposition, for I will not be led against my will with my eyes bound when I do not know where I am going.” Bismarck knew of the rising tide of opposition, for he had his agents and eavesdroppers everywhere, and received their reports now in his official residence, now (and more often) at Varzin. What now caused the revolt to break out again more vehemently was the spectacle of a Prussian and an Imperial Government being carried on with the assistance of the Liberal groups, for the alliance had to be paid for, if not extortionately, at least in Liberal coin. One of the obnoxious measures given to the popular parties, in acknowledgment of favours past and to come, was the District Government Ordinance of December, 1872, which was to do for rural administration what Stein’s Municipal Ordinance of 1808 did for urban government – to abolish an oligarchy and place local government upon a broad popular basis. First rejected by the Upper House, this measure was only passed after the dissolution of the Diet and the dilution of the obstructive Chamber by the creation of twenty- five new peers. Following in the wake of the School Inspection Law, this measure exhausted both the patience and the fidelity of the feudalists, who ever since the introduction of constitutional government had been so intimately identified with the Ministry that they had come to regard it as no less intimately identified with themselves, and the breach with Bismarck which resulted lasted for some years.

The next step in the quarrel with Rome was to try direct conclusions with the prelates, who had hitherto acted as though they and not the King’s Ministers wielded the power of the State, and had set at nought the civil authority in a way that in the King’s Ministers would have been treason. A beginning had been made in January, 1872, with the chaplain-general of the forces, who had forbidden a chaplain of the Cologne garrison to use a church which served likewise for separatist Catholic services, though directed so to do by

the Minister of War. The Minister's remedy was simplicity itself; he abolished the chaplain-general's office. Other military chaplains who obeyed their bishop's orders rather than those of the military authorities were dismissed. The Bishop of Ermeland had already made himself specially notorious. One of his acts had been to forbid Roman Catholics to have any intercourse with their excommunicated brethren. Now Dr. Falk warned him that such boycotting was a direct infraction of the Prussian Common Law, and that unless it were withdrawn he would be suspended from his see. The bishop invited the Minister to address his letters to the Pope, and on being again asked whether he was prepared to obey the law of the land he replied with a refusal to give any undertaking of the kind. Thereupon his salary was suspended. The Archbishop of Cologne had pronounced the "greater ban" upon several Roman Catholic professors of Bonn University who had declined to accept the dogma, and when the Government refused to remove them from office, had forbidden attendance at their lectures. For the present nothing more could be done by administrative measures to remedy the intolerable situation created by conflicts like these; all the more, therefore, did the Government feel the need for stronger powers, and these were now created.

At the end of 1872 Bismarck's health had broken down under stress of work, and still more of disappointment and chagrin at, the defection of those who should have been his staunchest supporters. In a letter to Roon he complained in December that he was surrounded by enemies. "I am in disfavour with all the members of the royal house," he wrote, "and even the King's confidence in me is declining. Every intriguer has his ear." In the bitterness of his isolation he appears for a time to have contemplated total retirement, but on reflection he saw the danger of handing over foreign affairs to a successor lacking his knowledge and experience. He therefore offered to retain the Chancellorship and the portfolio of Foreign Affairs if the King would relieve him of the office of Prussian Minister-President. To this course the King agreed, and Roon accepted the vacated post at the beginning of 1873, retaining it until October, when Bismarck again took up the double burden.

In resigning the Presidency of the Ministry, Roon also laid down the office of Minister of War, which he had held since 1859. The

reason given for his retirement was ever-increasing physical infirmity, and his age – for he was now over seventy – seemed to justify the plea. His letters show, however, that he was also dissatisfied with the direction which domestic affairs were taking, and was unable to keep abreast with Bismarck's violent transformations, particularly as revealed by the development of the *Kulturkampf*. "Tired out as I am," he wrote to Blanckenburg at the time, "I feel incapable of stemming and forcing back the onrushing flood. By my assent to the District Government. Ordinance and the May Laws I have shown that I have abandoned the Conservative standpoint of 1848, and sincerely desire to see rational developments. But I have no breath, either physically or metaphorically, for being rushed."

When Roon went, the Conservatives lost all restraint. By the use of Court influence, the value of which they nevertheless seemed to exaggerate, by a violent Press campaign, and by backstairs intrigues of many kinds, they made a desperate attempt to undermine Bismarck's position, and to create in the public mind the conviction that Count von Arnim was really the man whom the country now needed. Nor was Arnim slow to accept his friends' estimate of his abilities. Bismarck nipped the plot in the bud by promptly disgracing the aspirant to his office. Causing Arnim to be recalled from the Paris embassy on the ground of contumacy and neglect to give to the Government's policy due support, he wound the wayward diplomat in toils which held him the more securely the more he struggled to free himself, until at last he was undone.

Bismarck felt keenly Roon's defection at a critical moment, when troubles were threatening him at home and the foreign situation had suddenly taken an alarming aspect. "By your retirement," he wrote to him (November 20, 1873), "I am left alone, for you were the only sympathetic spirit amongst the Ministers. The remnant of the old stock that remains is good for nothing. Office will henceforth be lonely for me, and the more so the longer I remain. The old friends are dying or changing into enemies, and one does not make new ones. As God will! Your vacant sofa seat in the yellow council-chamber will never be filled again, and I shall never see the void without reflecting, 'I had a comrade!'"

On retiring, Roon had addressed to his colleague a generous and fervent valediction (October 12th): "Let me call to you out of a full

heart, ‘Adelante, adelantador, atrevido!’ (’Forward, ever forward, brave hero!’), and beseech God’s blessing on your further prosperous and grandiose endeavours.” Nevertheless, with recovered freedom he still cultivated close association with his old feudalist friends, and retained to the end an attitude of detachment, amounting at times to covert hostility, towards the Government and its policy, though his hands were never soiled by intrigue. “It would only be justifiable,” he wrote on April 18, 1874, when Bismarck’s enemies were conspiring to compass his downfall, “to make Bismarck impossible, or to create difficulties for him if there were a better man to put in his place. But where is there such a man? Moltke? He would not be likely to agree. Manteuffel? Him I regard as quite impossible, though I prefer not to give my reasons. Who else is there? I know absolutely none. Whatever may be said, therefore, against Bismarck, or rather against his political devices, I should still regard it as a great misfortune if he were to be compelled to retire owing to illness or intrigue. I regard him as necessary so long as I can find no better man, and I know of none. The political hotspurs who would like to overthrow him do not know what they want.” Meanwhile, the struggle with Rome developed. For the present Prussia had still the scourge in hand, and the flagellation of the rebellious clerics was far from completed. In January, 1873, Dr. Falk further justified his appointment to office by introducing a series of four drastic bills which later were passed as the “May Laws.” The first of these laws took from the bishops much of their disciplinary power, and made it an offence punishable with fine or imprisonment for any servant of the Church either to impose or to threaten penalties in matters not of a strictly religious character. The second related to the education of the clergy, which was now placed entirely under State supervision. Henceforth the clerical office might be filled only by Germans who had undergone a prescribed course of liberal training; the entire organization and curriculum of seminaries and other institutions for aspirants to the office were subjected to State control; the bishops were required to notify to the Government all intended clerical appointments, and the Government was to have a right of veto upon them. The effect was not merely to raise the standard of qualification for the priesthood – a right proceeding done in the wrong way – but the priest was made for practical purposes a State official. This intrusion of the secular power in a sphere in which the

Roman Catholic Church had never tolerated interference was not made more acceptable by the fact that the law was applied equally to the Protestant confession.

A further law facilitated secession from the Church. Henceforth all that was necessary was for the dissentient to declare before a local judge that he wished to withdraw – a short-sighted measure, which in later years cut deeply into the cohesion of the State Protestant Church. The fourth of the May Laws, besides limiting and subjecting to State control the ecclesiastical discipline to which Roman Catholic clergy were amenable, brought it under regular and prescribed procedure, and provided for appeal to the ordinary courts of law.

During the discussion of these laws it was found that some of their provisions were contrary to the constitution, but that discovery was not allowed to be an obstacle; the constitution was promptly amended and the laws were then duly passed. In the Lower House a few Conservatives of the staunch religious type were not able to support the Government in these revolutionary changes, but all were approved by the usual majority of two to one. In the vote of the Upper House the Conservatives were in a majority, and fearing that this attack upon Romanism would react injuriously upon the Protestant Church, they for a time withheld assent. Only after Bismarck had again threatened to elect new peers did they surrender. To his sorrow, it fell to the arch-feudalist Roon to defend the May Laws against his own political associates.

When the enactment of these new laws was seen to be certain, the bishops met once more at Fulda to take courage and devise counter-measures. After a week's conference they adopted an address to the Government declaring their determination to obey the laws of God, as they understood them, rather than those of men; in other words, to set the secular power still at defiance. "No Catholic Christian," they said," could acknowledge these laws or voluntarily obey them without the gravest violation of his faith." The Government's answer to this challenge made it clear that the laws would be enforced without compunction.

Feeling in the Protestant parts of the country now had worked itself into a kind of frenzy, and there was no longer any question of moderation or mutual concessions, no longer any fair weighing of right and wrong. If the Roman Catholic bishops and clergy were

obstinate, rebellious, and provocative, the great mass of Protestants, clerical and lay, were intolerant, implacable, and vindictive. The "No Popery" party, lashing itself into fury, had armed itself for an old-fashioned fight in the old-fashioned way, and bigotry ran riot. The few Protestants who remained sane in the prevailing dementia, and refused to join in the general hue and cry against the rival confession, were attacked almost as viciously as the Ultramontanes themselves, and branded as enemies of their country and the State. Yet the inevitable effect of coercion upon the persecuted Church was to strengthen its cohesion. In the elections to the Prussian Diet in November, 1873, the Ultramontanes gained thirty-two seats and became the second strongest party in the Lower House, while in the elections to the Imperial Diet in the following January they increased from sixty-seven to ninety- two.

Having entered upon a policy of repression, one measure created the need for another, for by the very act of coercion new difficulties and problems were created. One of these arose out of the wholesale sequestration of bishops and clergy. One of the first of the dignitaries of the Church to suffer was the Archbishop of Posen, Ledochowski. His salary was withdrawn at an early stage in the quarrel, but as he was not dependent upon the State treasury he continued to administer his diocese as before. Called upon to vacate the see, he refused and was prosecuted, and as on conviction an impossible fine was imposed upon him, he was imprisoned for two years. The Archbishop of Cologne and the Bishops of Treves and Paderborn, after incurring fines to the amount of some thousands of pounds, similarly passed from six to eight months in gaol; if upon some of the prelates this ignominious punishment did not fall, it was only because they fled the country. As with the bishops, so with the clergy; prosecution, imprisonment, and sequestration were their common portion. Yet bishoprics and benefices whose occupants had been removed by the Government were not held to be vacant by the Roman Catholic Church, since it did not recognize the right of a secular power to invade its jurisdiction. As, therefore, the patronal authorities in such cases refused to appoint either successors or substitutes, it was necessary for the State to devise arrangements in order to prevent large sections of the Roman Catholic population from being deprived of religious ministrations. This was the origin of a law passed early in 1874, providing for the

administration of vacated offices.

About this time Bismarck let it be known in Rome that peace was possible if the Pope wished for it. Cardinal Antonelli declined to take the first steps, however, conscious that the Prussian Government was engaged in a futile struggle and that time was on Rome's side. The struggle, therefore, continued. A further Prussian bill to make civil marriage obligatory was introduced in March, 1874. The measure was repellent to the consciences of many deputies and of a large number of citizens favourably disposed towards the Government and its policy, but it had been made necessary by the repressive laws which had gone before. For inasmuch as many of the sequestered clergy, as in conscience bound, continued to perform the duties of the sacred office of Wich the State had nominally deprived them, it followed that in the eyes .of the law the official acts done by them – and amongst them the performance of the rite of marriages – were illegal. The civil and social confusion thus created could only be remedied by separating the civil from the ecclesiastical sanction of the marriage contract and regarding the former only as valid and necessary.

As a member of the Second Chamber of the Prussian constituent Diet of 1849, Bismarck, then at the threshold of his public career, had protested against making civil marriage an article of the constitution, on the ground that to do so would "weaken in the national mind the sense of religion and of the religious tie of marriage, degrade the office of the clergy, and subordinate the Church to a bureaucracy." As late as 1868 he had repeated his objection to such a worldly innovation. Though still heartily disliking this measure, it became his duty to propose it, under pressure of circumstances which were far stronger than his convictions. "I believe," he said, "that the State needs this law as a measure of defence, and I am resolved to defend it, like much else that does not commend itself to my personal convictions and especially those of my youth." Like the facilities given for withdrawing from the State Church, this measure, too, was to prove a doubtful blessing to Prussia. Undoubtedly it has had all the ill results predicted of it by Bismarck in 1849, with others like to them; an increased tendency to dissolve marriage by divorce, and even in certain classes of society to dispense with marriage altogether, may be attributed in large measure to the secularization of the marriage ceremony.

A year later (February 6, 1875) the principle of civil marriage was applied to the whole Empire, though not without strong opposition from a number of State Governments which were not convinced of its necessity. In the meantime the Imperial Diet had passed a law (May, 1874) to prevent the exercise of ecclesiastical functions by unauthorized persons. Under it, contumelious ecclesiastics might be assigned to definite places of residence, might be deprived of the citizenship of their States – a penalty which disqualified them from being citizens of any other German State – and even be expelled from the Empire if they dared to exercise office or functions of which they had been deprived by the secular power. While thus Bismarck's hand lay heavily upon the Ultramontanes at home, his eyes had been fixed anxiously upon their associates in unfriendly France. There a new spirit had reigned since the nation had recovered from the first depression caused by the disasters of 1870-71. During the first two years of the Republic it fell to Thiers to direct the policy and organize the will of the chastened nation, and he devoted his energies undividedly to the one purpose of healing the wounds wrought by war and internal discords. With that end in view he discouraged ideas of revenge, and strove to concentrate the nation's mind upon its own regeneration, as a goal to be reached only by the severe discipline of moral earnestness and strenuous devotion to public and private duty. The purging of his Government of elements which he believed to be hostile to national unity brought about in the spring of 1873 a combination against him of the various groups which, represented the old monarchical traditions and attachments, and in face of a vote which, though it left the Ministry with a small majority, was yet too emphatic to be ignored, he resigned the presidency on May 24th, and was the same day succeeded by Marshal MacMahon.

During MacMahon's term of office a reactionary spirit set in; the Monarchists and Clericals, who had bided their time, made common cause and gradually gained the upper hand. Embittered by the repressive laws which were being enforced in Germany against their Church and co-religionists, the Ultramontanes in particular embraced with vehemence the spirit of revenge. Roman Catholic bishops gave to the movement their support, and a well-disciplined Press and a profuse literature popularized the idea in every nook and corner of France. Berlin took alarm, and when repeated remonstrances to the

Government had no effect, Bismarck caused the German ambassador in Paris to direct its attention to certain French laws which would enable the authorities to check and suppress agitations of the kind, and to hint that if the powers at command were not used the conclusion would have to be drawn that there was no desire to discourage these agitations.

Veiled threats of this kind proving equally ineffectual, Bismarck in January, 1874, instructed Arnim to do his utmost to induce the Government to join in the Prussian struggle with Rome. The papal pretensions, he pointed out, were a source of danger and of possible political convulsion for all States, but for France in particular to tolerate them would be to destroy any hope of peaceable relations with Germany, or, indeed, with the rest of the world. The French Government was asked, in fact, to bring its policy into line with that of Prussia and the German Empire, and so to lessen for Bismarck the increasing weight of his domestic difficulties. Again the desired response was lacking.

In the midst of his campaign of repression Bismarck himself had a taste of vindictive violence. On July 13, 1874, while at Kissingen taking the cure, he was shot at and slightly injured by a half-witted journeyman cooper of Magdeburg, a Roman Catholic whose brooding over the Church and State struggle had brought him to the verge of insanity. His assailant was sentenced to fourteen years' penal servitude. An attempt was made to fix upon the Clerical party responsibility for the crime, but without the slightest justification. The only effect of the outrage was to increase Bismarck's popularity greatly, and to harden the resolve of the Protestant part of the nation to persist in the policy of coercion. In December, in order to make the breach with Rome complete, the embassy to the Vatican was suspended. A little later Bismarck even tried to persuade the Italian Governmnent to agree to the revision of the Law of Guarantees with a view to curtailing the Pope's liberty, but Italy had no wish to fight Germany's religious battles, and the suggestion was not entertained.

An attempt to intervene in the dispute made by the Pope early in 1875 led to new reprisals. A papal letter of February 5th, addressed to the Prussian bishops, declared null and void all Prussian laws which denied and sought to undermine the divine sanction and authority of the Roman Church. The publication of the letter was proscribed in

Prussia, and newspapers which reproduced it were confiscated and their editors and publishers prosecuted, whereupon a Clerical deputy read the document in the Prussian Lower House, a device which legalized its appearance in print as a fair report of parliamentary proceedings. In April the Prussian Government replied with the Bread-Basket Bill, a measure which suspended all grants by the State to the Roman Church in sees whose bishops and clergy refused to promise obedience to the laws of the land. The bill was promptly passed with the usual majority. A law followed repealing the articles of the Prussian constitution which guaranteed independent government to the Protestant and Catholic churches and their substitution by the provision that these churches and all others should henceforth be regulated by the laws of the State. Effect was given to this change by a law relating to the administration of the estates of Roman Catholic communities. It provided that a church council consisting of from four to twelve persons should be formed in every parish under the superintendence of the bishop, to administer the Church funds. The first disposition of the bishops was to ignore this law like the other, but on reflection they decided to accept and work it rather than see the estates of the Church pass under the control of State officials, which was the alternative to the formation of local councils.

The last of the Prussian exceptional laws was one passed in May, 1875, dissolving the religious orders and congregations, with the exception of those engaged in the nursing of the sick. It was stated in justification of this measure that between the years 1855 and 1873 the number of members of these organizations had increased from 913 to 7,992.

It is unnecessary to follow the course of the quarrel in the other States in detail, for while the vigour with which it was waged and the weapons used by the State Governments differed greatly, the issues in the main were the same everywhere. The position in Bavaria was peculiar, for while there the Government disputed Rome's pretensions not less earnestly, though with greater moderation, than in Prussia, the Diet was under Ultramontane influence. The Bavarian bishops and clergy were unanimous in accepting the dogma of infallibility and in the resolution to exact compliance from the entire body of the laity, and, relying on the traditional strength of their position, they did not anticipate serious opposition. The Government had forbidden the

promulgation of the dogma without royal permission, yet the bishops acted in defiance of the prohibition, and coerced, penalized, and excommunicated right and left. Some of them declared to be null and void every oath which involved a pledge contrary to the Roman Catholic faith as lately expounded. If, they said, the State placed itself in opposition to the pretensions of the Church, the duty of obedience and loyalty, either in official or soldier, lapsed. Divided in will and fearing the results of an open breach with the national Church, the Government temporized as long as possible, but the example of Prussia and the Empire eventually compelled it to move. In Bavaria, too, contumelious bishops were removed from their sees, and the vacated offices remained unfilled, while many of the clergy were sequestered.

In Würtemberg there was far less upheaval, partly because the Roman Catholics formed a small minority of the population, partly from the greater spirit of accommodation peculiar to the Swabians. In Baden, two-thirds of whose inhabitants were Roman Catholics, the Government acted with a high hand, and besides severely repressing clerical excesses, it offered recognition and support to the separatist Catholic communities, which were enabled to form a number of churches. In Hesse, where Bishop von Ketteler headed the clerical revolt in its early stages, a series of laws modelled on the Prussian May Laws was introduced. In relation to the schools the Government improved on Prussia's example, for it excluded the priestly orders from any share in their management and facilitated the conversion of confessional into "simultaneous" schools.

At an early stage in the quarrel a counter-movement, aiming at the defence of the Roman Catholic faith against the new claims made on behalf of the Papacy, took root in several parts of the country. Its adherents called themselves Old Catholics, and the impetus came from Munich. Here Döllinger early raised the flag of revolt, and his fellow-protesters at the university rallied to his support with an address of congratulation endorsing his protest against the "unchristian tyranny" which the bishops of Germany were seeking to impose upon the consciences of free men. The bishop of the diocese replied by excommunicating the daring theologian, upon which his colleagues elected him to the rectorship of the university. This assertion of independence in the headquarters of German Catholicism was as

unpleasant for the heads of the Church as it was unexpected by them. When a mass meeting of Catholic citizens of Munich adopted a written address of protest to the King, the bishops and clergy replied by excommunicating all whose names could be identified. Embitterment increased when a Munich non-juring professor was refused absolution at death and burial with ecclesiastical forms was forbidden. Public opinion now indignantly called upon the Government to hold a more resolute attitude, and the prevailing discontent led to a change in the Minister-President. The display of mingled intolerance and tyranny shown by the ecclesiastical authorities in Bavaria gave to the Old Catholic movement just the publicity and stimulus which it needed. Döllinger had for many years occupied a unique position as the advocate of a free Catholic Church of Germany. More than twenty years before, at a Roman Catholic Congress of 1848, he had sketched the outlines and organization of such a church, and it was understood that he would have been willing to be its Primate. Into the movement which seemed likely to realize his dream he threw the full weight of his personality and influence. In September, 1871, a general congress of Old Catholics was held at Heidelberg, where, together with a few of the clergy, a large body of laymen, many of whom bore names well known in scholarship and in academic circles, gathered from all parts of Germany. The idea underlying the movement was not merely to preserve the Roman Catholic Church from a new superstition, but to purge it of Jesuitical influence and of all hindrances hostile to nationalism and national aspirations. The result of the congress was a decision to constitute a separate church. Later, at Cologne, a bishop was chosen in the person of Dr. Reinkens, a former professor of Catholic theology at Breslau; the necessary administrative machinery was created; a constitution was drawn up; and arrangements were made for the organization of parishes. The bishop was ordained by a Dutch Jansenite prelate, and besides being allowed to take the oath to the King of Prussia, the Diet of that country voted his salary. The Governments of Baden and Hesse formally recognized him as the bishop of the Old Catholic communities in those States, and that of Bavaria would have done the same, had it had the constitutional power, but in default it allowed him to visit the separatist churches and to hold confirmations. In all these States the Diets made grants towards the stipends of the Old Catholic clergy, and placed churches

at the disposal of the new communities.

Nevertheless, propitious though the beginning of the Old Catholic movement was, it never reached formidable proportions. Many communities were formed in the South and in Prussia, but they were all small, and everywhere it proved easier to establish churches than to obtain priests. In Bavaria the ratio was one priest to fifteen churches. The movement, in fact, represented only the intellectual protest of a minority of the educated Catholic laity; it lacked a deep spiritual foundation, it created no religious or moral stirring, and the common people in general held aloof. At the time of its maximum strength, in 1878, the adherents of the Old Catholic Church did not exceed 52,000, and four years later, when the quarrel with the Church was nearing a settlement, they had fallen to 35,000.

For six years repressive laws fell upon the Roman Catholic Church and its leaders in Germany like the murrain upon the Egyptians; in Prussia alone twelve exceptional laws of various kinds were passed in four years. Thereupon, having, as they hoped, paralysed the power of Rome, the Governments, both Imperial and State, hoped for peace. So thoroughly had the net of coercion been drawn around the Church, that it seemed as though nothing more remained to be done but to gaze upon its futile and impotent struggles and wait until, in abject submission, it should sue for release. If systems of coercion worked like machinery, the system devised during the *Kulturkampf* would have been perfect. What the Government forgot was that it was attacking men and women in the most sensitive part of their being, their feelings and consciences – attacking them over matters and relationships which to the vast majority of Catholics were as precious as life and as sacred as death, their religion and the tie of the believer to his faith and Church. The Roman Catholic bishops and clergy may have been obstinate, lawless, and despotic, yet at least they were honest and believed that they were obeying a sanction higher than that of men. Hence, the consequence of persecution was that, instead of making mere misdemeanants of the clergy, the Governments made of them martyrs, and instead of cowing the laity, they roused in it a resentment which rallied it whole-heartedly to the side of a cause which, intrinsically, was by no means free from reproach.

But still the repressive laws were not obeyed. The consequence was that by 1877 eight archbishops and bishops had been removed

from their sees in Prussia, leaving only four in office, three had been removed in Bavaria, in Baden one, and in Hesse one. Half of the bishops in Germany had been displaced, and had sought asylum in other countries. “All went abroad,” says a German historian of the time, faithfully reflecting the uncharitable spirit which had gained the upper hand, “where they properly belonged.” Hundreds of clergy were similarly removed, many being imprisoned, and a far greater number of officers and servants of the Church of minor grades were deprived of their employments and livelihood. Many loyal Catholics returned in 1871 from the French war, in which they had gallantly fought for their German fatherland, only to be exiled and compelled to take refuge in the very country which but lately they had left as victors.

As with the servants of the Church, so with its institutions and agencies. Colleges and schools were suppressed; societies and fraternities were dissolved; and churches were closed by the hundred. The whole organization of the Church was dislocated; its ministrations were in many parishes entirely suspended, and in a larger number seriously curtailed. The infant was left unbaptized; the marriage rite was performed by stealth; the dying were deprived of the solaces of their religion and were left to go upon the last journey without the *viaticum*. The condition of things created in England at the dissolution of the monasteries in the dark sixteenth century was repeated in Protestant Germany in the enlightened nineteenth. Those who suffered most were not the prelates and priests, but the common people, who understood little of the questions in dispute, never gave a thought to the political aspect of the papal power, and were unable to appreciate the high-flown theories of the State put forward by the parliamentary advocates of the policy of coercion, but who knew by daily experience that their beloved Church was in hostile hands, that their temples were defiled and the priests whom they revered were persecuted and torn from their side. Bismarck was never weary of declaring that the struggle which he was waging with Rome was “not a confessional but a political struggle,” but the distinction – to him, perhaps, clear enough – did not lessen the religious animosity and bitterness of those who encouraged and applauded him, or alleviate to his victims their hardship and suffering.

To such depths of pettiness and spite did the anti-Clerical agitation go, that in 1874 the historian Heinrich von Sybel, then professor at

Bonn, formed a fanatical association whose elevated mission it was to spy into the public and private life of State officials in every town and village in the Rhineland – Landrats, Mayors, school inspectors, clergymen, teachers – and denounce to the Government those who were deemed to be wanting in loyalty to its repressive measures. Bismarck welcomed and used the information yielded by this despicable inquisition until revelations of blackmail, levied by a more than usually sordid agent, discredited the organization and its works, and he then suddenly knew it no more. For a time the strength and self-consciousness of the new Empire seemed to be justified by this relentless assertion of its will. It was left for the next generation to learn by bitter experience that in binding in chains the Church of the minority the nation bound itself more strongly than it knew in slavery to the omnipotent State in whose name the work of repression was done.

Nevertheless, there was something amiss with the imposing system of coercion, and of this the proof was seen in its failure. For it produced results contrary to those expected of it; those whom it was intended to overawe became only bolder and more defiant; and at the very moment that the policy of repression appeared to have reached its maximum effort it was reversed. Bismarck's correspondence shows that when, at the end of 1877, Count Henckel von Donnersmarck was mediating between him and Gambetta in Paris and elsewhere, trying to win the then dethroned tribune for an anti-Clerical policy, his Government was limbering up its guns and prepared to seize any pretext for beating a retreat.

Attempts at reconcilation were first made by Rome in 1878. Within the first five weeks of that year three of Italy's foremost men passed away – first *La Marmora*, the ill-fated general who led the Italian army to defeat, in 1866; then Victor Emmanuel, the unifier of the kingdom; and on February 7th the Pontiff himself. Pius IX was succeeded by Cardinal Pecci as Leo XIII, a man of suaver temper, not less jealous of the rights of the Sacred Cure, but more diplomatic in asserting them. Diplomatic intercourse had ceased between Rome and Berlin, but through Bavaria the new Pope notified his election to the German Government in a message in which he begged the Emperor to restore concord in the place of strife, and so strengthen the loyal devotion of his Roman Catholic subjects to his person. "Our soul will

never have quiet," he wrote, "so long as ecclesiastical peace has not been restored in Germany." The Emperor, in a cordial reply, invited the Pope in turn to persuade his flock to obey the law, since disobedience was the cause of all the Empire's woes.

The exchange of courtesies did not go further at the time, but it had achieved a valuable purpose: silence had been broken. Feelers after peace were soon afterwards put forward on both sides, first through intermediaries, leading gradually to informal negotiations, which passed through every gradation of suspicion, caution, and incertitude before they reached the stage when practical statesmen could take them in hand. For while both State and Church were fully persuaded that the quarrel had lasted long enough, neither wished to concede too much.

The Pope wanted the Falk Laws to be repealed bodily. That would have been a complete surrender to Clericalism, and an implicit admission of the papal right to dictate to the State which laws it should reject and which retain. The demand was therefore refused. At the same time Bismarck let it be known that, though the laws themselves would have to remain, there were ways of softening and even of evading them. But what was the Pope willing to offer in return? Loyal obedience to the laws must be yielded by the clergy in any event, but a mere promise to that effect would not be sufficient; there must be some guarantee of good conduct. A guarantee which might be acceptable was the recognition by the Pope of the legalized duty of bishops to notify in advance to the Government all intended appointments to the clerical office – the much-discussed *Anzeigepflicht* – a duty which, as has been shown, carried the complementary right of the Government to object to appointments so proposed. So protected, the civil authority would at least be able to convince itself that the aspirants for clerical office were men of loyal and law-abiding character. After much wavering, in which the negotiations at times seemed in danger of shipwreck, mutual concessions were offered on these lines: the Prussian Government was to obtain a dispensatory power to whittle down the Falk Laws in practice, and to offer a hope of permanent modifications at a later date, while the Pope was to be bond for the good behaviour of the hierarchy in Germany and to accept without reserve the obligation of pre-notification. The desire for peace having thus been practically avowed, further progress on the

same way was merely a question of method and time. Upon one thing Bismarck was determined: the Roman Church should never again be restored to the privileged position which it had enjoyed in Prussia from 1840 to 1870.

In August, 1878, Bismarck himself, while at Kissingen, had begun negotiations with Cardinal Marsella, the papal nuncio at the Bavarian Court, who had been empowered by the Cardinal-Secretary Franchi to treat with him. The bargain proposed and virtually agreed to was that in return for the recognition of the bishops' duty to pre-notify clerical appointments the German Government would be willing to resume diplomatic intercourse with Rome. Franchi's sudden death interrupted these negotiations, and his successor, Cardinal Nina, lacking his pacific spirit, was not in a hurry to resume them. Nevertheless, there was no longer any doubt as to where events were tending when in July, 1879, Dr. Falk resigned office. In taking leave of the Prussian Diet, which had supported him so well, he said that after having fought the Clericals for seven years he was not the man to have charge of a policy of peace and conciliation, nor was it likely that his opponents would willingly receive olive-branches from his hand. When Falk resigned, eight of the ten Prussian bishops had been removed from their sees, 1,400 clergy sequestered, and all the Catholic seminaries closed. He was succeeded by Herr von Puttkamer, by marriage a relative of the Chancellor.

In the following September Bismarck at Gastein resumed with the Pro-nuncio Jacobini the negotiations which were suspended at Kissingen. The Vatican had stiffened in the meantime; now it asked for the unconditional repeal of the May Laws and in return offered little. Bismarck said that the recognition by the Pope of the obligation of pre-notification was a *sine quâ non* of an agreement, but, that conceded, Germany would be willing not only to resume diplomatic intercourse but to do much more to efface the effects of the religious war. All that the Pope would promise was that he would "allow" clerical appointments to be notified to the Government; he subsequently added that even this unsubstantial concession was conditional upon the practical abandonment of the May Laws. Bismarck was still willing, and offered, to obtain for the Prussian Government dispensatory powers in virtue of which the laws, while continuing in force, might be treated as nugatory, but this concession

did not satisfy the Vatican, which now displayed a double portion of the Chancellor's stubbornness. Despairing of success, Bismarck, after a sharp exchange of letters, abandoned negotiations and determined to introduce such ameliorative measures as the interests of the Roman Catholic population required, without for the moment seeking any concessions in return, a proceeding which amounted to an unconditional surrender. The retreat had made such progress by April, 1880, that Bismarck wrote to Prince Reuss, the German ambassador in Vienna, who was mediating between the Government and the Holy See: "So far it is we who are showing practical overtures; the police and legal prosecutions have been stopped, as far as the law allows of it; we have imposed silence upon the public prosecutors and the police, so far as we have been able, and we intend to propose laws which will allow us to do this on a larger scale." He complained in particular that the Centre party, both in the Imperial and Prussian Diets, was as implacable as before.

The first legislative harbinger of the new policy was seen in the following month, when a bill was introduced in the Prussian Diet empowering the Government at discretion to fill vacant benefices and restore sequestered priests in disregard of the stipulations of the May Laws of 1873, and to allow the orders which were engaged in the care of the sick to carry on their work as before. A further proposal that the King should be able to reinstate bishops who had been removed by judicial procedure was abandoned in face of strong opposition. After radical amendment, the bill was passed in July. How serious were the evils which it was designed to remove may be shown by the fact that during the first six months of its operation nearly a thousand parishes, with a population of two million souls, were again supplied with priests. During the same year most of the vacant bishoprics were refilled, and the State grants towards their maintenance were renewed. Diplomatic intercourse with the Vatican was also resumed.

Bismarck was known to be a consummate opportunist, but even the blindest of his admirers were greatly perplexed by this quick and thoroughgoing change of front. The cool deliberation with which this unemotional statesman entered upon the quarrel with the Church was only equalled by the *nonchalance* with which he withdrew from it. To judge by the suddenness with which, once its futility was recognized, he lowered his flag, it might have seemed as though the bitter war of

the creeds had been a huge pretence, a mere stage fencing match and not a mortal duel. Yet all the time he was careful to make it clear that he had not changed his opinions upon the questions at issue, but was influenced altogether by considerations of expediency; he wanted peace, and was prepared to pay the necessary price. The party hacks and servile journalists of the day bravely went to his assistance. These men, who had hitherto defended the Government's policy of coercion as the quintessence of political wisdom, were now required to prove that conciliation and not force was true statesmanship, and their versatility and resource proved equal to the task.

While, however, Bismarck had a genuine desire to pacify Rome and so to end a quarrel which was morally exhausting, and good neither for the Governments nor the State, another and a more worldly consideration had all the time been influencing him. The majority upon which he had hitherto depended threatened to break up. For a new and altogether different problem, the reform of fiscal policy, had come to the front, and already it was apparent that if headway was to be made with it he would need the help of other allies. The National Liberals, who had stood staunchly by him since 1867, showed signs of wavering, for the economic changes contemplated were wholly at variance with their convictions. On the other hand, the Conservatives had already signified their readiness to give the Government hearty support in any attack upon the existing Free Trade system, and it seemed at least likely that the co-operation of the Ultramontanes, with their strong leaning towards the interests of agriculture, might be had for a price, payable only in Canossa coin.

The only uncertain question was, Would the Conservatives and Clericals agree to work together? That question was now answered for him satisfactorily by the two parties themselves. The Conservatives had never liked the repressive laws, and least of all those which struck at ecclesiastical authority. They had also a genuine fear that the war against Rome would prove to be a war against religion in general, and they were confirmed in this fear by the vigour with which the democratic parties, the traditional enemies of the Church and the open champions of free-thought, threw themselves into the fight on the Government's side. More than once it was only the strength of old traditions which had prevented them from making common cause with the Ultramontanes, who, whatever their political

misdemeanours, still stood for religion and the authority of the Church. As early as 1876, recognizing the value of an alliance with a party, now a hundred strong, with whose general outlook they had so much in common, the Conservatives made formal overtures for an alliance, and these were favourably received. Upon the coalition which followed Bismarck's power rested for many years, and with a change in the Ministerial majority came an entire change in the spirit of legislation, for it was soon seen that under the Conservative-Clerical régime the masters would be the servants and the servants the masters.

It is not necessary to follow through all its stages the progress to Canossa. At every shrine on the irksome way the travel-worn pilgrim made some new oblation of piety and of penitence; each one a law removing some disability, assuaging some hardship, or recanting some pretension rashly claimed and never effectively asserted. The displaced bishops were restored to their sees; all the vacant benefices were refilled, often by priests who had not yet undergone that perfect system of State education which was to turn the Romanist cleric into a good German, indisposed again to place the Church before the State: the closed churches were reopened and their ministrations resumed; the duty of pre-notification was renounced in the case of the assistant clergy whose appointments were revocable; the State grants impounded under the Bread-Basket Law were paid back with interest; the admission of foreign priests was again sanctioned; and five years after Dr. Falk's retirement most of the surface wounds and sores wrought upon the body of Catholicism seemed to be closed and healed. Another and less bigoted Minister of Public Education, Dr. von Gossler, had in the meantime (1881)superseded Puttkamer, who was given the congenial portfolio of Home Affairs, carrying with it the duty of administering a new repressive law directed against Socialism and manipulating the elections. A visit of friendship made to the Pope in December, 1883, by the Crown Prince Frederick delighted the German Protestants almost as much as the Catholics, and seemed to seal the new bonds of amity.

The ultra-Protestants objected vigorously to the readmission of the orders, but Bismarck brushed all such resistance aside. In adopting legislation for the conciliation of a large section of the population, he said with provoking candour, the prejudices of a small minority must

be disregarded; it was sufficient for him that the Roman Catholics themselves stipulated for this concession. That had always been his principle in negotiating with opponents. “In concluding peace with foreign Powers – Austria, France, Denmark,” he once said, “I never asked myself the question why do they press this or that claim; I simply recognized the fact that they did press it.”

It was a habit of Bismarck to attribute to his colleagues and subordinates the blame for legislation which experience showed to have been ill-considered and mistaken. Hence the time came when he tried to fasten upon Falk responsibility for the laws bearing that Minister’s name. He admits frankly that he enjoined upon Falk a policy of reprisals, but pleads that he did not prescribe the precise methods or pretend to accept in all details the measures which were, in fact, applied. He accuses Falk of a psychological misconception of his task and of the means which he employed in endeavouring to accomplish it. “The blunder was made clear to me,” he has written, “by the picture of honest but awkward Prussian gendarmes with spurs and trailing sabres pursuing dexterous and light-footed priests through back-doors and bedrooms.”

This endeavour to make a scapegoat of a Minister whose chief fault was that he did his master’s bidding not half- heartedly but only too well has been endorsed neither by friend nor foe. The fact remains that Bismarck’s compunctions came after the event, when the policy of hardness had proved a failure. He was far more credible when he declared that he never regarded the May Laws as permanent, but as exceptional measures devised to meet an exceptional situation, weapons of war intended for use only so long as hostilities lasted, and that sooner or later he contemplated their abandonment. “When one believes that one is on the eve of war,” he said on one occasion in reference to these measures, “and lays in stores of melinite and other explosives, one does not for that reason regard such materials as a permanent part of one’s household furniture.”

On which side, then, did victory rest in this bitter struggle between the spiritual and the secular power? It seemed at the end that both sides were left almost as at the beginning. That meant, however, that the secular power had been beaten. In offensive warfare that side is the loser which fails to realize its objective; the laurels lie with the side which is able to hold its own successfully. That is what the

Church had done. One of his ablest and at the same time most discriminating of his biographers, Erich Marcks, says of Bismarck's action in provoking the *Kulturkampf* that "When he entered upon it he did it in the spirit of the great realist, exaggerating the intellectual and underestimating the ecclesiastical forces behind the State and the nation." Without injustice to Bismarck, one might go further and say that he made no allowance at all for the fact that in fighting the Roman Church he was fighting a spiritual as well as a political antagonist, and that he failed altogether to grasp the truth that in warfare between mind and mind force has seldom, if ever, proved a successful weapon.

Hence it was that the State emerged not stronger but weaker from the futile struggle, for it had taught the Church its power and made of it an enemy with which there could be no hope of permanent peace. This was perhaps the bitterest disappointment which his defeat brought to Bismarck. When the Centre party was formed he professed to doubt its permanence, and even when the struggle was suspended he still cherished the belief that with the disappearance of the causes which gave to the party its *raison d'être*, its influence, and even its confessional character, would disappear. Here he entirely failed to appreciate the profound influence upon the national mentality and temper of the bitter feud for which he more than any other man was responsible. Never again were tolerant relationships between the two great confessions restored. Their position henceforth was to be that of an armed truce, each side ever suspicious, vigilant, *en vedette*, and ready for any sudden call to arms. At the close of his life, Bismarck had to revise his earlier hopeful judgment. He wrote in 1893: "The conflict which has been waged from time immemorial between priests and kings cannot be brought to a conclusion at the present day, and in Germany least of all."

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY, 1848-1888

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WHILE THE STRUGGLE WITH the Roman Catholic Church was still in progress domestic troubles of another kind had been thickening. Not for the first time, but with greater urgency than before, the working classes were claiming a more tolerable place in the new Empire which they had helped to create. Socialism had been proclaimed to them as a gospel of hope and cheer, and they were welcoming it with the enthusiasm of men to whose lot the powers ordained by God had long been singularly indifferent.

If the student of sociology knows nothing else with certainty, he knows that it is seldom possible to point to any one event or point of time and say of a great cultural movement, “In this way it had its origin; from that day dated its commencement.” The current of modern German Socialistic thought had many tributaries, and the sources of these tributaries must be sought in different gathering grounds. What is known as the social question – using the phrase in its narrow sense as connoting the problem of labour and its place in economic life – was of later date in Germany than in England because the conditions which created it were there of later origin. When the economic revolution following upon the introduction of steam power and machinery and the consequent institution of the factory system of production had for practical purposes been completed in England, Germany was still leisurely jogging along in the old-fashioned eighteenth-century ways. The German working classes had to pass through the same transition as the English, but its severity was tempered to them by the experience of the older industrial country and by the humaner sentiment of the age. The change to a new industrial order, when it began, was also slower, and it never became so complete.

Two conditions essential to the success of the factory system of production are capital and concentration of population, and in Germany generally these conditions have never existed to the same extent as in England; even if the little kingdom of Saxony be regarded as an exception, it is only partially so. In the middle of the nineteenth century Germany was more an agricultural country than England had been in the middle of the eighteenth. It is estimated that one-half of the population was then directly engaged in agricultural occupations, and that industry employed little more than one-third. Similarly, Germany has not until quite recent years been a country of large

overcrowded towns. Even as late as in 1871 three-quarters of its population ranked as “rural,” and nearly two-thirds lived in rural communes containing less than 2,000 inhabitants. The predominance of agriculture gave to the home industries a far more prominent place than they had ever taken in England, while, owing to the more equal distribution of population in small communities, the handicrafts and the system of petty enterprise generally have retained even to the present day much of their old vigour and importance.

Nevertheless, from the second quarter of the century forward the steady progress of capitalist enterprise created a large displacement of labour. Thus spinning machinery gradually crushed out home employment in the cotton, linen, and woollen trades; the power loom similarly displaced the hand loom, turning the weaver, usually for his good, from his unhealthy workshop-bedroom into the factory, where he was not under the same temptation to work by night as well as by day; gas, supplanting the tallow candle, made the chandler superfluous; railways displaced road carriage and deprived the cartwright of much of his work. These and similar transformations were typical of a large and widespread dislocation of industry. In some parts of the country this dislocation created for a time acute misery. One of the most important centres of the home industry in Prussia was Silesia, whose cotton and linen weavers underwent great privation owing to the introduction of machine power in the early ‘forties. When in 1844 the sufferings of these people found expression in violent outbreaks, the Government intervened to suppress disaffection with a severe hand, but did little to remove the underlying evils. The Silesian industry was further injured after 1846 owing to the fact that the King, who had never been sympathetic to the population of republican Cracow, agreed in that year to the permanent incorporation of this City State in Austria, ignorant, as the Government afterwards acknowledged, that Cracow was the principal market for Silesian textile goods.

In no Continental country is the social conscience more awake in the present day than in Germany; in none was it more somnolent than in the middle of last century. At that time labour knew the State far more from the repressive than the benevolent side. The political reaction which set in with the promulgation of the Carlsbad Decrees of 1819 was still in flood, and the severe measures taken against

democratic movements had led to the forcible or voluntary exile of many men who should have been the leaders of the popular cause. The emphatic response given by Germany to the French revolution of 1848, however, shook the Governments out of their lethargy. With the popular demand for political rights were mingled more or less definite demands for the amelioration of social conditions. It was inevitable that the popular disaffection of the time should have brought the Sovereigns and the Governments under a common condemnation. The withholding of constitutional rights from people who had never possessed them would not alone explain the vehemence of the outburst which then threatened thrones, and converted monarchs for a time into humble suppliants for their subjects' indulgence. The working classes instinctively associated their condition with the political systems under which they lived. The King who claims to be absolute must at least be prepared to meet the responsibilities inseparable from such a claim, and failure to do so makes his position an anomaly and his assumptions an imposture. Proceeding from that assumption, without arguing it, the workers were led to identify the evils from which they suffered with the system of government under which they lived and the Crown which was its emblem. How closely economic demands were interwoven with political at that time was shown by an "open address" to Frederick William IV of Prussia which was published broadcast by the factory workers and handicraftsmen of Berlin in March, 1848, when revolution was knocking at the doors of the royal castle. The very moderation of its language emphasized the reality of the grievances from which the petitioners suffered.

"Most exalted King," said this document, "the workers of every grade venture to address a petition to you in these hard times; it is for the speedy relief of the workers' great need and security for the future. We therefore humbly beg your Majesty to appoint a Ministry for Labour which shall be composed only of employers and workpeople elected by their peers. Such a Ministry will alone be able to ascertain the true reasons of the oppressed condition of the people, to ameliorate their lot, to protect the State against the dangers which threaten it, and to guard the property and lives of all against imminent destruction."

Among the demands advanced by the proletariat of that time were the systematic organization of labour, State provision of work for the

unemployed, co-operative associations, higher wages, and shorter hours of labour. When two months later a crowd of some thousands of labourers stormed the entrance to the Ministry of Commerce in Berlin, it was to demand not a constitution but work, and when, instead, alms were offered to the leaders, they were rejected with indignation.

At that time constitutions were given and parliaments created where they did not exist before, yet to the movements and aspirations of the working classes the Radical and Liberal parties, absorbed in political controversies, gave neither sympathy nor a bare hearing, for the proletariat had no votes, and politically it was therefore of no consequence. Moreover, individualism, which had kept back social legislation in England, was now in the ascendant in Germany, and the cry of the Radical politician was only for economic liberty.

One of the foremost members of the individualistic school was the parliamentarian Schulze-Delitzsch, who had at that time a considerable following amongst the Radicals. Conscious though he was that much was not right with an industrial system that doomed so large a section of the population to poverty, his remedies were nevertheless simplicity itself. Let men work diligently, live frugally, and save unceasingly, and all would be well. The fault was in themselves that men were underlings. He taught the comfortable doctrine that capital, intelligence, and moral behaviour were the chief conditions of the workers' advance in social well-being. If a man had not the first, he should cultivate the others all the more, and so restore the balance. Where, however, individual ability and industry proved unavailing then co-operative effort might be tried, but such effort must be based on self-help, for nothing must be done that could in any way weaken the spirit of self-reliance or deflect the State from its true purpose, which was to keep order and guard the security of life and above all of property. The forms of co-operation approved by Schulze included credit, loan, deposit, and similar societies or banks, societies for providing their members with raw materials, warehouse societies for the sale of their industrial products, stores for the sale of food and general commodities, and sickness and provident societies, though the last he favoured grudgingly. Schulze in general copied the principles which had been followed by the co-operative movement in England for many years, though he placed these principles upon a more scientific basis and was altogether bolder in his application of the co-

operative idea.

The co-operative movement at once attracted the more prosperous section of the working classes, though, as in England, its immediate developments were all on the distributive side. The artisans and smaller entrepreneurs, who stood on the thin dividing line between a condition of independence and one of economic servitude, were attracted by an idea which seemed to offer to them a reasonable hope of holding their own against the attacks of the factory and of capitalism. To the masses of the toilers, however, co-operative schemes brought neither relief nor hope.

In the meantime, many influences had acted upon the working classes from abroad. German artisans, in their wanderings to France, Switzerland, and England, found themselves transported into a new and larger world of ideas, and what they learned by intercourse with their comrades in these and other countries they gave back to their own circles at home. They learned especially how backward was the political and social position of the German workman in comparison with that of the working classes of England and France. While the English workman, if discontented with his wages or conditions of labour, could bargain with his employer on equal terms, and lay down his tools if so disposed, such a liberty was unknown in Germany. Because “strikes” were forbidden the word itself had no equivalent in the German language at that time, and it was found necessary to borrow the English word and respell it. It was 1865 before the idea of strikes was first openly advocated in Germany by a cigar-maker named Fritzsche, who formed an association of his trade associates for the purpose of fighting capital by this hitherto untried weapon. Two years later freedom of association was conceded by the North German Diet, and it then became possible to organize strikes on a larger scale.

The time came when the short-sightedness which had, by means of narrow franchises and fraudulent systems of representation, excluded the proletariat from any share in the political life of the nation avenged itself on the Governments and the parties which monopolized legislative power. Refused influence in parliament, the leaders of labour determined to form a party outside, independent of all existing political groupings. A new popular movement, having at once a political and a social side, was begun, and it speedily took root in the towns. Until the beginning of the ‘sixties the working classes had not

been organized as an independent class, either politically or professionally. In so far as they took part in politics it was as an appendage of the Radical party, which was able by their help to assert a predominant position in the Prussian Diet, for the first and only time in its history, during the constitutional conflict of the years 1862 to 1866. There was a time when the Radical party, had it but shown an intelligent interest in the welfare of labour, might have prevented the secession which took place later. Only when the working classes had found themselves, however, did the middle-class political parties think it worth while to go in search of them, but then it was too late.

It was at this time, and in this atmosphere of social ferment, that there came into sudden prominence a striking personality who was destined to impress himself strongly upon the life of his generation and powerfully help forward the collectivist movement. This was Ferdinand Lassal or Lassalle (as he preferred to call himself), whose pyrotechnic flitting across the national stage between the years 1860 and 1864 will remain always one of the most romantic episodes in German social history. Born at Breslau in 1825, the son of a prosperous merchant, Ferdinand Lassalle was originally intended for a commercial career, but being sent to the university, he there studied philosophy and law, and he eventually chose the advocate's calling. In his later life his attention was divided between law and politics, with a leaning towards the latter. A diary kept by him in the years 1840 and 1841 shows that even as a youth of fifteen, when his political maturity was that of a man twice his years, he had determined to devote his life to the democratic cause; it also shows that the spirit of revolt was in his very blood and marrow, all expression of the protest of the rarer part of his race against centuries of oppression. He was not fifteen when he wrote, "I would not even shrink from the scaffold could I but once more make of them (the Jews) a respected people. Oh, when I yield to my childish dreams it is ever my favourite fancy to make the Jews, armed, I at their head, free!"

He would rather have been a Christian than a Jew, an aristocrat than a *bourgeois*, but as he could not alter his position in life he would at least one day make the ruling classes tremble. Still as an adolescent in years – for he was only twenty- three – he took part in the revolutionary movement of 1848, coming into association at the time with Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and other democratic leaders who

were later to become famous. For inciting the populace of Düsseldorf to armed resistance to the Government, when the Prussian National Assembly, was forcibly dissolved in November of that year, he was arrested and luckily escaped with imprisonment for six months. His defence at the trial ranks still as a masterpiece of acute legal argument. It was called a speech, though in fact it was not spoken at all, for Lassalle had had it printed in advance, and copies had been circulated even before the trial came on, on which account the elaborate defence was taken as said. Alexander von Humboldt wished to intercede with the King on the prisoner's behalf, but Lassalle refused him permission, and when he heard that a free pardon had been sought on his behalf the arrogant youth wrote to the King to say it had been done without his knowledge and that he would not accept it.

Eager to be in the full current of national life and to find for his talents a wider sphere, wherein he might win the recognition for which his soul craved, he obtained through Humboldt the King's permission to settle in Berlin, and thither he removed in 1857. In Berlin he played for a time a more or less dilettantist part in political life. Already he was judged to be a man of brilliant parts but of divided purpose. He had done some clever political writings, and had dabbled in philosophy, but he was better known as a graceful man of the world, with plenty of money at his disposal, who took life easily, and had no reason to quarrel with fortune. At that time he could not have been regarded, by any stretch of imagination, as a serious social reformer. Amongst the friendships which he made about this time was that with Lothar Bucher, a reformed revolutionary of 1848, who was settling down into respectable ways and was destined to enter the service of Bismarck and eventually to be his confidential friend. In 1861 he contemplated the founding of a "big newspaper," and he writes to Marx, still a refugee in Paris, to ask if a capital of 10,000 thalers (£1,500) would be sufficient, and if he would be willing to join in the venture. Marx appears to have favoured the idea, and Lassalle accordingly sought for him the benefit of the political amnesty which was proclaimed on the accession of William I, in order to enable him to live in Berlin. A Liberal Minister, von Schwerin, was short-sighted enough to refuse the request.

The Liberal party in the Prussian Lower House was then on the

threshold of the fateful constitutional conflict over the budget question, and it was in addresses to Liberal ward meetings in Berlin on the absorbing question of the day that Lassalle came to the front as a popular leader. A man of vehement convictions, he did not spare the Ministerial constitution- breakers, and his bitter attacks upon the Government led to a prosecution on the charge of incitement to social antagonism. He emerged from the trial with flying colours, for though he was sentenced to four months' imprisonment the sentence was reduced on appeal to a small fine.

From politics he next extended his survey to social reform, and it was in this sphere that he made his special mark upon the movements of his time. The working classes were then still, as we have seen, as sheep without shepherd and without fold. There were in all the large towns working-men's associations of a local character, pursuing social and educational aims, but there was no central organization voicing their common interests. During the summer of 1862 the leaders of the Labour party at Leipzig succeeded in forming a representative committee for the purpose of establishing such a national organization. A preliminary meeting was held in Berlin in October, but the organizers were unable as yet to agree upon a basis of action: they were not even sure whether the association ought to be political or non-political, and if the former, whether independent or a section of the existing Progressist or Radical party. While this doubt remained, a *deus ex machinâ* came forward in the person of the lawyer-politician. On April 12th, Lassalle had addressed a Berlin labour association on labour politics and aims, and the address was at once published with the title "Labour Programme." Schulze-Delitzsch had been preaching to the working classes the saving virtues of self-reliance and self-help by co-operation. Lassalle, with his Hegelian love of antithesis, leaped to the idea of co-operation with the help of the State. The idea was not, of course, new; Louis Blanc and Proudhon had popularized it in France already. What was new in Germany was Lassalle's practical application. With ruthless dialectic, he tore to pieces the entire fabric of Schulze's scheme of salvation by individual effort. In arraigning Schulze, however, he indicted the Radical party to which he belonged, with its arid programme of liberties which never materialized into bread and butter, free labour and free competition which gave the workless man no employment, and its insistence upon

the blessedness of the free exercise of personality for men whose personalities were distorted out of human semblance by the hard pressure of economic forces and social fate. All such ethical values were to Lassalle figments and falsities. He stormed at the intellectual dishonesty of politicians who strove to conceal behind fine phrases the inherent rottenness of an industrial system which already was economically and morally bankrupt. The Israelites were not more remorselessly ground down by Pharaoh than the helots of modern capitalism by Ricardo's "iron law of wages," according to which the rate of remuneration under competitive conditions tended inevitably to fall to the level of bare subsistence. The only hope of the labouring classes was to slip the yoke of private bondage, claim the State as their protector, and with its help become independent producers through a system of national co-operation, which was to be financed by national funds.

Meanwhile, the project of a national labour organization had been suspended. The *brochure* containing Lassalle's programme coming now before the notice of the Leipzig constituent committee, they invited its author to expound his views in greater detail. Lassalle answered in an "open letter," in which he developed a bold programme of political and economic reforms to be realized by the working classes as an independent party. The effect upon the Leipzig committee of this new pronouncement was powerful, but not yet decisive. The committee had been in communication with Schulze-Delitzsch, who at their request had similarly propounded his own gospel of social reform, consisting mainly of the old platitudes about self-help and co-operation. Before choosing between the two programmes they invited Lassalle and Schulze to debate the whole question in public, and the rivals talked at each other during two days before a conference of 1,300 delegates of working- men's associations, which met at Leipzig in May, 1863. Lassalle carried the meeting with him and won an overwhelming vote of approval. His specific for the economic uplifting of the working classes was still as before the formation of cooperative Productive Associations by the help of State funds, but recognizing that this could not be done unless the workers first captured the State machine, he coupled with this proposal a demand for universal suffrage, which was to be a step towards genuine popular government. It was a new conception of the State as an institution that might and

ought to do something more for them than tax them and make them into soldiers. In germ his programme was thus that of the later Social Democratic party, to the extent that political measures were to pave the way for economic, but on the other hand Lassalle accepted both nationalism and monarchy as presuppositions of his scheme. The statutes of a national organization to be known as the Universal German Working Men's Association were adopted on May 28, 1863, and Lassalle was chosen as the first president.

For twelve strenuous months Lassalle threw himself into the organization of this Association with all the ardour of an intense nature. He travelled the country restlessly, addressing meetings, receiving deputations, forming societies, and everywhere converting his hearers by the rush of his enthusiasm, the strength of his conviction, and the magic of his impulsive personality. They had never heard of Louis Blanc's workshops or of Fourier's phalansteries, and therefore could not know of their failure. It was enough that this wonderful mesmerist told them that Schulze-Delitzsch and his self-help were out of date and that he and his Productive Associations would convert the existing system of private enterprise, with all its one-sidedness and its extremes of riches and poverty, into a comprehensive national partnership in which all men would have enough and no man would fare better than his neighbours. The common people, above all, heard him gladly; he was the object of their frantic ovations; processions greeted his coming and benedictions accompanied his going. Lassalle must have been far freer from vanity than he was had his head not been turned by this surfeit of faith and adulation. It was turned badly, for Lassalle's vanity was as boundless as his ambition.

What was the secret of the singular influence upon the masses of this remarkable man? It cannot be found altogether in the political or social doctrines which he proclaimed to them, for these were not new. A democratic franchise and genuine popular government had been the aspiration of the German nation long before the Frankfort National Assembly brought them so near to realization in 1848. Not one of the vital ideas in Lassalle's economic programme was his own. He had taken his "iron law of wages" from Ricardo, and had also been anticipated by the warm-hearted Prussian landowner and philanthropist Heinrich von Thünen (1783-1850), who had laid down

the proposition that the capitalist can always maintain labourers and enjoy the fruits of their labour for the price of their bare life, and as a practical protest against this idea had worked his own estate on the profit-sharing principle. Similarly, the idea of co-operation in production with State help, with the entire working apparatus through which it was to be realized – the normal workday, the labour tickets, and the rest – had been borrowed from his learned contemporary and friend Rodbertus, with whom he was in active correspondence.

Lassalle's distinction lay in his ability to transmute the vague theory of the study into a tangible substance which common minds could lay hold of, to make the ideal seem real to men who had neither the time to pursue nor the mental grip to apprehend abstractions. His purely political utterances impress one more by their pointed common sense than by any special profundity. Here was seen his happy faculty for appropriating the commonplace phrases and formulas of inferior minds and giving them back to the world in more attractive form. Many a reputation is built up on the same slight foundation, with even slenderer material, in modern political life, where half the game is that a man shall be able to give to platitudes the appearance of originality, and above all do it better than his rivals. And if this had not been sufficient to assure success with the crowd, Lassalle was a born tribune, a consummate controversialist, and a master of the whole armoury of rhetorical resource. Moreover, he adapted his oratory to his hearers, and therein showed genius. The heavy Liberal politician, as a rule a confirmed pedant, spoke down to popular audiences – the Conservative politician ignored them altogether – in turgid periods, like a pedagogue rather than a party leader, delivering his message with faultless, gramophonic accuracy and indifferent whether the result were praise or blame. Lassalle addressed his hearers as a man to men, and he spoke for effect; his rivals talked books to the masses; his was the utterance of a living soul. Doubtless he had a very decided consciousness of his superiority to the people whom he sought to attract to his banner, but he was too prudent, too wary, too calculating to betray it. He boasted, indeed, that in every line he wrote he was "armed with the learning of his century," but, like a shrewd man of the world, he remembered that scholarship is not for the popular platform. He could soar to heights of sheer eloquence, but his strength lay in his power to identify himself with

the common people, to speak to them in their own tongue, to traffic with them in their own mental currency. It was this characteristic, combined with his fire and magnetism, his geniality and approachableness, which caused him to fascinate and inflame the thousands who had hitherto been chilled by aloofness and disdain.

He was unquestionably a demagogue, a special pleader, and even to some extent an actor, as both demagogue and special pleader always are, yet all his rhetorical arts and wiles were only means to an end, the advancement of a great public cause which was intensely real to him. When he entered public life he may not have been conscious of a call to be a social regenerator, yet it is certain that before long he developed a social conscience of a very genuine order, and when allowance has been made for much exaggeration and not a little false sentiment, due to race, temperament, and the artifices of controversy, his writings and speeches may be accepted as the faithful expression of a true and generous sympathy with the workers and an earnest desire to befriend them.

Though he made no public avowal to that effect, Lassalle was conscious as his agitation proceeded, and as he came more and more to grasp the largeness of the problem which he had raised, that his Productive Associations were capable of only a very partial success, and that private capitalism was so strongly entrenched in its positions that only a great social and political convulsion would dislodge it. He did not advance far enough in his agitation to make positive attacks upon the institution of private property, but his acute study, *The System of Acquired Rights*, might well have been intended to serve as a prolegomenon to Karl Marx's *Kapital*, which appeared six years after it. The argument of the book is that rights, and amongst them the right of ownership, are entirely historical in character and hence are transitional and fugitive; each and all have been created by law, and the breath which has made may, with equal right, unmake them. Stated thus, the proposition, like many other propositions equally far-going in their implications, is not so unreasonable as to excite alarm; the point of importance lay in its application. That Lassalle would have hesitated to advocate the abolition of private property or anything else had the success of his great scheme depended on it may be doubted, for he was by nature a rebel, and the tribute paid to him upon his tombstone as "the thinker and fighter" is truer than

posthumous tributes usually are.

But even had he not been confronted by the power of vested interests, Lassalle came to doubt whether his Productive Associations would, after all, prove the universal specific he had represented and perhaps had once believed them to be. His correspondence with Rodbertus shows that he was growingly conscious of the superiority of the system of collectivism propounded by that profounder and more original thinker, and that, had it been possible, he would have staked his faith upon it more readily than upon his own. And ultimate success apart, it is certain that there never was a moment in which the ambitious scheme had the slightest chance of adoption on a large scale. Lassalle himself was so modest in his expectations that he appears to have contemplated an enterprise financed by a State loan of five million pounds – the capital of a medium- sized joint stock bank in the present day. He brought his project before the notice of the Prussian Government, and in conferences with Bismarck, then Minister-President, convinced that unsentimental statesman, if not of the practicableness of his proposals, at least of the policy of encouraging them. Although public money was not invested in Lassalle's scheme, the King was persuaded to make a grant out of his private purse towards the organization of Productive Associations. Probably the encouraging glances thrown upon the scheme from above were not altogether unconnected with a hope that it might split the democratic party, and divert the attention of the working classes from the constitutional struggle then in progress, if not win for the Government active allies in that unlikely quarter. Certainly the Radicals did not forgive their old associate for his unkindness in having, at a critical moment in the history of the popular cause, divided the interest and energy of the democratic forces.

With the aid of funds raised in various ways, a number of associations were formed, but they did not live long, and it is interesting to recall the fact that, like the parallel industrial partnerships which had been established in France some years before on co-operative principles, the only co-operative enterprises which seemed to thrive were those formed in simple trades requiring neither a high degree of technical skill nor a large amount of capital, and that the larger the scale of experiment the less favourable were the conditions of success. It was found also that the members of

established associations, which, after doing hard pioneer work, had succeeded in gaining a foothold, were reluctant to admit new workers on equal terms.

The key to Lassalle's personal influence – a key of many wards – has been suggested. Wherein, then, lay his significance and value for the German Socialist movement and his special service to the working classes? His mind was in the highest degree assimilative, but it was not creative. Nor does his fame as a social reformer rest upon any practical achievements. Of his social and political ideas, indeed, not one proved practicable for his generation, or has been realized since. With his death his Productive Associations drooped and died, while his "Universal" Association was soon swallowed up in a more militant movement.

His value was chiefly suggestive and stimulative. First, it was his merit to have made the social question itself real to a nation which hitherto had been prone to ignore its practical claims. For more than half a century before him there had been a direct line of social philosophers, from Fichte onward through Heinrich von Thünen, Karl Marlo, Heinrich Gall, Rodbertus, and others, who had been speculating on the position of the labourer in society, his relation to his circumstances and surroundings, and groping their way towards conceptions of economic conditions based on greater justice and offering the promise of social harmony. Lassalle brought these theories of social reform out of the dim atmosphere of the study into full daylight; ideas which had been the monopoly of the scholar he made the intellectual stock-in-trade of the workshop, the platform, and the market-place.

It was he also who first gave to the working classes of Germany self-consciousness, taught them to feel, think, and act together, and implanted in their minds the idea, which in later years became fruitful in a singular degree, that they must work out their own salvation, and hence that independent organization as an estate apart was the only key that would open the door of fate behind which lay for them the promise of a larger life and a fuller civilization. As appendages and hangers-on of the dominant political parties they might, indeed, hope to receive such boons as their patrons, influenced by interest or fear, might choose to dole out to them. Only, however, by organizing themselves as a separate party and resolutely going their own way,

regardless alike of blandishments and temporary disadvantages, would they be able to wrest from society the full recognition and rights which were their due.

More truly than any other man Lassalle may be claimed as the father of the modern German labour movement. Not only so, but he was the herald of modern State Socialism. At a time when the Prussian tradition of State solicitude for the weaker members of society had almost died out, when individualism was arrogantly boasting of its victories, and the Radicals were busily propagating the dangerous idea that the State was a necessary evil, to be endured but no more, Lassalle restated the forgotten doctrine that the State represented the nation's collective will and that its highest function was to advance the public good. His advocacy of co-operative production by the help of State funds familiarized not only the working classes, but the ruling classes and the Government, with the root idea of modern State Socialism, and so made easier the advance begun on these lines twenty years later.

And so it may be said that Lassalle's principal legacy to his generation was an influence and an inspiration rather than a completed scheme of social regeneration. He, who was no idealist himself, gave to the German working classes new ideals which have carried them far, and will carry them still farther, in the struggle for greater economic independence and higher culture. Not only so, but those for whom he worked are conscious of their indebtedness to this gifted man, who, though not springing from their midst, came so near to them, and it is a true and creditable instinct which has led them to observe as the birthday of the Social Democratic movement the day upon which he publicly expounded in Berlin the first systematic German programme of labour claims and aims.

In order to follow the later developments of German Socialism it is now necessary to go back some years, and take up the threads of a movement which for a time ran parallel with that created by Lassalle. If Lassalle may be regarded as the father of German Socialism, another German, Karl Marx (1818- 1883), was the father of International Socialism; and, like Lassalle, Marx also was a Jew. The son of an advocate of Treves, in the Rhineland, Marx first studied law, but early in life he drifted into journalism. It was the time of the reactionary terror in Prussia, when every political journalist carried his own halter

in his pocket, and when in 1843 his journal criticized the Government too drastically it was suppressed. Marx thereupon removed to the freer atmosphere of Paris, and there lived for several years in close fellowship with Heine and other political outlaws, writing much, and working out schemes for the conquest of the German proletariat.

It was in Paris, too, that he met another exiled compatriot, Friedrich Engels, with whom he concluded an intellectual and political partnership which was to last until his death. In collaboration with Engels he drew up in 1847 the famous *Communist Manifesto* with its invocation "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" which was destined to be the rallying cry for his later International agitation, and his was the first signature.

After the revolutionary movements of 1848, in which he had given the German insurgents a helping hand, Marx settled in London, which henceforth remained his home. There for some years he worked quietly on an epoch-making book which, while revolutionary in conception and purpose, was to win the admiration of friend and foe alike, only emerging from his literary haunts at short intervals in order to take part in new propagandist endeavours on behalf of the democratic cause. *Das Kapital* was written in German, and the first of its two volumes appeared in 1867. Because he wrote in England, Marx's illustrations are largely drawn from the life and conditions of English industry and labour as he studied them in the middle of last century. Some German critics of the later Social Democratic movement have in consequence maintained resentfully that this movement was a gift from England. The contention is ludicrous. What is true is that many of the early German propagandists of the Socialist cause – next to Marx, the best known are Weitling, Engels, and Liebknecht – for the most part driven from their own land by repressive laws, in enforcing which German Governments never thought of the interests of other countries, sought England's hospitality, used England as a laboratory for their study and research, and so came to regard that country as a second and kinder fatherland. But always German Socialism was indigenous and racy of the soil. No other nation could have produced a system of thought so ponderous and pedantic, and so little in harmony with human nature and actuality.

Powerful as was the Communist Manifesto as a declaration of

policy, it was many years before it bore practical fruits. Only in 1862 was a serious concerted endeavour made to organize the adherents of the International idea for aggressive work. The London World Exhibition of that year offered the opportunity. London had in the meantime become a centre of traffic in Socialistic thought. The exhibition drew thither ardent social reformers from continental countries, and the exchange of opinions led to a desire for closer international cooperation in the spread of Communist doctrines. The wish took practical shape in 1864, when at a congress representative of many nations, held on September 28th, a committee was appointed to draw up the statutes of an International Working Men's Association. Of this organization Marx became the head, and its direction on Communist lines became the principal occupation of his later political life. He had already gathered round him a band of enthusiastic disciples who, imbibing his ideas and spirit, were now ready to carry the new evangel from England, where it failed to gain a foothold, to Continental countries. The head council of the International was located in London, but each country had its own central committee and general secretary, whose duty it was to organize local associations and federate them in district unions.

One of the most devoted of Marx's followers was Wilhelm Liebknecht, a journalist who had proved his attachment to the democratic cause in 1848, and had been expelled from Prussia with so many other inconvenient politicians. When William I came to the throne in 1861 a Liberal political amnesty was proclaimed, and Liebknecht took advantage of it and returned to Germany. Now he founded with others the *North German Gazette* as a republican organ, but left it when it fell into Government hands. Had he been like-minded, he might, with Lothar Bucher and a few other accommodating democrats of the time, have made peace with autocracy and ended his days in a comfortable Civil Service post. Liebknecht's character, however, was of the stern stuff of which martyrs are made. His idea of setting the world right was to turn it upside-down, yet with all his extravagances he was a truly honest man. One of his colleagues described him as "a fanatic with all the good and bad sides of one." A man of singular unselfishness, no leader of the German Socialist movement spared himself less or identified his interests and life more completely with those of the working classes.

He was not a profound thinker, and he did not write much, but as a public agitator for the Socialist cause his fame was both national and international. It was Liebknecht whom Marx sent to Germany in 1865 in order to assist the cause of Internationalism there.

Lassalle had thrown away his life on August 31, 1864, in a love duel, an act of physical suicide which might have been impossible had not moral suicide long preceded. The tragedy brought the productive partnership movement almost to a standstill, and the momentum lost was never regained. The Working Men's Association continued for a time, but its "universal" character became more and more a fiction. The best of leaders would only have been good enough to follow in the footsteps of so consummate an organizer and so daring a propagandist, but Bernhard Becker, whom Lassalle had named in his will as his successor in the presidency, was a pompous mediocrity, without either talent or character. When after three years Becket gave place to J. B. von Schweitzer, it was too late to arrest the decay that had set in owing to bad leadership and internal dissension.

The International thus came on the scene in Germany at a time specially favourable to its success. Liebknecht had no sooner entered upon his attempts at fusion, however, than he once more found himself in conflict with the authorities. In 1865 be was again expelled from Prussia, an act of unwisdom for which the Government was to pay heavily. For Liebknecht took refuge in Saxony, and it was there and then that he made the acquaintance of a man who was to become the most famous protagonist of German Social Democracy. This was August Bebel (1840-1913), a wood turner, the son of Roman Catholic parents, hitherto a good monarchist and a parochial politician of the mildest type. Then a young man of twenty- five, he was fourteen years Liebknecht's junior and his inferior in education and in grasp of economic questions, yet he proved himself from the first an apt and enthusiastic learner. Bebel was then the president of a working men's improvement association in his native town, and was so far from having imbibed definite Socialistic notions that he opposed Lassalle and his project of productive associations. Liebknecht brought him out of his obscurity, opened his mind to the large social issues which faced the modern world, and set the parochial politician on the way for becoming a cosmopolitan statesman.

In 1867 the North German Diet came into existence, the creation

of a universal, equal, and direct franchise, and to it five Socialists were elected. Liebknecht and Bebel were among them, Bebel sitting for a Saxon constituency, still as a delegate of the orthodox People's Party, unconscious of the larger field of activity which awaited him. Under Liebknecht's influence the Leipzig wood turner was won over to the cause of International Socialism, and though it was the elder man who gave the impetus to the movement in Germany, it was Bebel who now captured the working classes for it. As a delegate to a congress of working-men's associations of the Lassalle type held at Nuremberg in September, 1868, Bebel proposed the acceptance of the International programme as approved by the Geneva Congress of 1866. The proposal was adopted, but against the opposition of some fifty of the delegates of the nationalist persuasion, who in protest withdrew from the proceedings and forthwith formed an independent congress on the old lines. The great significance of the step taken at Bebel's instigation lay in the fact that the German Socialistic movement now for the first time entered a political channel. The earlier labour organizations, like the workers' improvement and educational associations, the trade unions, and even to some extent the Lassalle productive associations, had eschewed political agitation as a hindrance rather than a help to the cause of labour. Henceforth political aims took a leading place, and the labour movement became more and more closely identified with republicanism. In August, 1869, the first Social Democratic congress for all Germany was convened jointly by Liebknecht and Bebel. It was held at Eisenach, and 372 delegates (representing 150,000 organized workmen) attended, nearly one-third of them being old followers of Lassalle. The Lassalleans had hoped to dominate the congress and bring back their erring brethren into the nationalist fold, but as soon as they saw the strength of the new party they again withdrew and conferred alone. The majority now formed the Social Democratic Working-men's Party on International lines, and adopted an elaborate programme of political and economic demands. The Lassalleans remained aloof for six years longer, but the fusion of the two parties was completed at a congress held at Gotha in May, 1875. The alliance was cemented by the adoption of a new programme, by way of concession to the party absorbed. The Gotha programme likewise contained both a political and an economic side. The economic side was intended to conciliate the Lassalle party and the

political to satisfy, in so far as satisfaction was possible, the extreme anti-nationalists. Being thus a compromise, the programme disappointed as many as it pleased. Marx regarded it as illogical, fallacious, and unsound, and in a letter to his friend Bracke even condemned it as "thoroughly contemptible and demoralizing to the party." Liebknecht, who probably at heart agreed with his master, obtained possession of this incriminating document, and kept it secret for many years, until it could no longer do harm. Good or bad, however, the Gotha programme held the party together until 1891, when the congress of Erfurt revised it.

In the meantime the Lassalleans had entered into a prosperous partnership. The Socialist movement was running stronger than ever; its organization covered the country; and it could boast of twelve political newspapers, as well as minor publications, with an aggregate subscription list of 100,000. In the elections to the Imperial Diet two years later the Socialists put forward 175 candidates, fully three-fourths of whom were known as "counters," and appealed for votes solely in order to register the party's voting power in the constituencies. The number of votes recorded for Socialism was 493,000 as compared with 352,000 in 1874, while the seats captured increased from nine to twelve.

A crisis in the history of the Socialist movement was now reached, for at this point the more or less passive resistance which had hitherto been offered to it by the Governments gave place to a policy of systematic repression. A great change had come over the temper of the working classes under the influence of the militant doctrines of the International and the violent advocacy of its propagandists. More and more Socialism had taken the form of class warfare. It became an article of faith with the party that the existing social order must be superseded before the working classes could hope for any amelioration of their lot, and the employment of forcible measures was commonly advocated. There was even much loose talk of revolution. Perhaps to most of the leaders revolution meant merely a fundamental transition, to be wrought by peaceful means, but others were prepared for violent changes, and said so. A small party, convinced that no useful compromise with German autocracy was possible, boldly preached the Paris gospel of 1871, 1848, and 1789. Liebknecht, one of the most vehement advocates in the extreme wing

of the party, to whom, however, much might be forgiven by reason of the vindictive persecution which he had to endure, frankly accepted Bismarck's reproach of sympathy with violence, and declared: "Socialism is simply a question of power, to be decided not in parliament but in the street and on the battlefield, like any other question of power." Yet he added at once that the Socialists had learned the doctrine that might is right from Bismarck himself.

In 1876 Bismarck decided that the time had come to oppose the further advance of a movement which had become dangerous to the State. He had watched its growth for a long time, marking with alarm its decline from the innocent Socialism on a monarchical basis which Lassalle had preached and in which he himself had for a moment taken a more than platonic interest. His contemporary sayings, when in France the Empire gave place to the Republic in September, 1870, would appear to indicate his apprehension even then as to the effect of the new political order upon the larger Continental monarchies. At a later date he said that he became for the first time conscious of the danger which threatened Germany when in the first session of the Diet in 1871 the Socialist deputies had lauded the Paris Commune. "That appeal to the Commune was a ray of light upon the matter, and from that moment I regarded the Social Democratic elements as an enemy against which the State and society must arm themselves." Already in that year he had endeavoured to induce the Governments of Europe to combine in resistance to the common enemy of their peace, and in the following year he had supported Spain in a proposal that the Powers should suppress the International Association, as the root of the evil.

Both of these attempts had failed in the absence of agreement; England in particular refused to depart from her traditional standpoint, which was that so long as the strangers within her gates obeyed the laws of hospitality there was no good justification for ejecting them. Busch, the revealer of so much of the secret political history of the period, says that Bismarck's motive in proposing international action on the Socialist question was not fear of Socialism at all, though that was the standpoint which Busch was bidden to emphasize in his Press articles on the subject, but rather a wish to keep Russia still isolated from France, by prejudicing the latter as the land of the Commune, and also to win Austria more firmly to Germany's side. As ever, Bismarck's motives were probably complex,

yet it need not be doubted that a genuine apprehension as to where the International and its propagandism might lead influenced him greatly. Failing thus to bring about international action, Bismarck turned his attention to possibilities of action at home. In 1874 he proposed an amendment of the Press Law which would have made the encouragement of illegal acts or of disrespect for the law an offence punishable by long imprisonment. The Diet resented that attempt to revive the evil memories of Carlsbad and to manacle again an institution whose freedom had been so lately won, and the matter rested for a time. Two years later he proposed to amend section 160 of the Penal Code so as to make it an offence to incite, either by word or writing, to acts of violence or to attack the institutions of marriage, the family, and property. But the Diet as then constituted was still unfavourable to attacks upon liberty, even in the name of *raison d'état*, and this proposal was likewise rejected as inconsistent with the imperial constitution, which guaranteed to all German citizens the right of free thought and free speech. Windthorst, the spokesman of the Ultramontanes, declared: "If the Minister of the Interior and his colleagues have no better means of dealing with the Social Democrats, and these people are really as dangerous as they are represented, then may God help us!" A sense of partnership in suffering made the Clerical leader tender to the grievances of the Socialists. To him it was far more important to know in what respects the Socialists were right than to ferret out their heresies. Let error, he said, be combated with truth, and above all let the Government remove the consciousness of injustice and so dry up the springs of discontent.

Two more years passed before Bismarck again attempted coercive measures. In the meantime the German Social Democrats had at the Ghent Internationalist Congress (September, 1877) subscribed to a manifesto in which the working classes of all lands again, as in 1848, proclaimed blood brotherhood, and vowed to use "every political measure which can lead to the emancipation of the proletariat." In the following year an event occurred which seemed to justify drastic action. On May 11, 1878, a half-witted tinker of Leipzig, named Hödel, a convicted thief of low character, fired a pistol shot at the Emperor in the Berlin Park. He missed his aim, but the attempt sent a wave of horror and indignation through Germany. The first thought of the reactionaries was to exploit the crime as the foul fruit of Socialist

agitation. Hödel professed to be a Social Democrat, and from this fact they drew the conclusion that regicide was a recognized part of his party's programme. It was in vain that the Socialists disclaimed responsibility for the crime, and pointed to Hödel's earlier connection with the Christian-Social party, then in high favour.

Bismarck had long been waiting for the opportunity of applying to the new political movement his specific of physical force, and now the justification seemed to have come. It is said that on hearing of Hödel's crime his first exclamation was, "Now we have them!" At once he sent word from his retreat in Varzin that a law against Social Democracy should be immediately prepared. It was ready in two days, and after endorsement by the Federal Council was laid before the Diet by the 20th.

Conceived in such haste, the bill proved to be badly drafted, and in Bismarck's absence it was just as badly defended in the Diet by advocates who were only half-hearted in their work. The first provision set forth that "publications and associations following the aims of Social Democracy may be prohibited by the Federal Council," subject to subsequent approval or disagreement by the Diet. It was pointed out, however, that so wholesale all embargo upon the aims of Social Democracy was absurd, inasmuch as many of them were found on the programmes of the loyal and patriotic parties. To the Conservatives this objection was pure pedantry, and they were for passing the bill without discussion in any form the Government wished. The thoughtful section of the House, however, declined to allow itself to be stampeded in a moment of panic, and the bill was rejected by 281 votes against 57, without reaching the committee stage. The majority consisted for the most part of National Liberals, Progressists, and Clericals. The Socialists had not taken part in the debates. Observing how the wind was blowing, and assured that the Government would be more easily beaten without their help than with it, they declared it to be inconsistent with their dignity to take part in the discussion of a "law which constituted an unexampled attempt upon popular liberty," and discreetly remained silent. The Government prorogued the Diet in pique, yet admitted its decision to be prudent and just by promptly announcing that the defeated proposals would not be proceeded with.

Once again, however, events played into Bismarck's hands, though

with a cruel irony. No sooner had the Diet refused to entrust to him the weapon against violence which he demanded than a further crime was perpetrated which both confirmed his attitude and confounded his opponents. On June 2nd a second attempt was made on the life of the aged Emperor, again in his capital and within sight of his palace. This time the would-be assassin was not a crazy youth, but a man of thirty years, a doctor of philosophy and a farmer. This man, by name Nobiling, awaiting his victim at the top window of a house in the Linden Avenue, fired two shots at him as he drove past, wounding him in the arm and neck, though not dangerously. Followed into the room by an infuriated crowd, which had rushed indoors from the street, Nobiling turned his still smoking weapon against himself with better effect, for the shot inflicted injuries to the brain, which brought on unconsciousness, and in this condition he lingered for several months, until death cheated the gallows of its due. The Emperor bore the blow bravely, suffering more in spirit than body. Recalling on the last day of the year the fate which had befallen him, he wrote in his Diary: "The physical sufferings were not to be compared with the pain that sons of Prussia should have perpetrated a deed which at the close of my life was doubly hard to overcome, and has darkened my heart and mind for the rest of my days."

Bismarck was now in no mood for temporising with a reluctant Diet. Apprehensive that it could not be trusted to endorse the drastic measures which the occasion called for, he persuaded the Federal Council to dissolve it, and new elections took place on July 30th. In the meantime, the Crown Prince had been charged with the representation of his father in affairs of State. The result of the elections was the return of a Diet entirely pliable to the Chancellor's wishes. In the previous year the Conservatives of North Germany, comprising the feudalists, had joined with those of the South and formed the German Conservative Party. The blend was not a good one, but it secured greater unity of action, and as a result the confederates gained thirty-eight seats, while the National Liberals lost twenty-nine, the Radicals eleven, and the Socialists three.

A revised bill for the repression of Socialist excesses was introduced on September 9th, and its success was assured from the outset. Bismarck took charge of it, and the speeches which he made in the course of the debates on its several readings deservedly rank

amongst his most remarkable political utterances. They were also important as foreshadowing the era of social legislation which began several years later. Throughout the discussions the Chancellor carried with him the overwhelming sentiment of the Diet, and public opinion in the country was equally on his side. It was in vain that the Socialists protested; the bill was passed on October 19th by 222 votes against 149, the majority including all the Conservatives and National Liberals, with several Progressists; while the entire Clerical party, still in antagonism against the Government on the Church question, and most of the Progressists voted in the minority. With a true insight the Radical leader Richter declared, as a parting shot at the bill: "I fear Social Democracy more under this law than without it." The Socialists received the result with defiance, warning the Government that repression would rather benefit than injure their cause. The law was to come into force at once.

The Socialist Law, which though first passed for a period of two and a half years, was destined to remain in operation for ten, prohibited all endeavours aiming at the subversion of the existing State and social order, or otherwise dangerous to public peace and concord. Meetings, festivities, and processions having the same objects might be dissolved or forbidden by the police authorities. Socialistic agitators might be imprisoned, refused residence in given areas, or expelled from the country, while printers, booksellers, colporteurs, owners of lending libraries, and innkeepers who promoted Socialist propagandism might be refused permission to carry on these occupations. The public circulation of Socialistic publications in any manner was made illegal. The penalty for infraction of the law was imprisonment or heavy fine. The most drastic weapon forged by the law, however, was the power given to the Governments to proclaim within given towns or districts a "minor state of siege," a condition entailing a rigid police surveillance over political agitation of all kinds, over public meetings, the sale of newspapers and publications, and the sale and use of arms. In a word, within a large and important sphere of her public life Germany was transferred from the civil to an arbitrary police jurisdiction. Bismarck never passed laws which were intended merely to adorn the statute book, and the Socialist Law was at once vigorously enforced. From the first prohibitions rained upon the Socialists like the plagues of Egypt – prohibitions of political

associations, of trade unions, of newspapers. Amongst the newspapers whose career was promptly cut short were the party organs *Vorzwärts* and *Zukunft*; but intellectual property is independent of time and space, and the suppressed sheets soon appeared abroad in the old guise and found ready admission into the country. Before the law was passed Liebknecht had declared defiantly, "We shall remain just as we are." That prophecy proved only true in part. A hue and cry was raised against the luckless leaders of the party, who were harried from town to town and from State to State like felons. The central executive lived for a long time a nomadic life, never certain of security in a new abode, wherever chosen, and ready to strike its tents at a moment's notice. Agitation became surreptitious and subterranean, and until the comrades were able to accommodate themselves to the new conditions and improve their methods it was seriously checked. Yet in the end zeal and devotion triumphed over all difficulties; with leader and follower alike it became a point of honour to stand by the cause and see it safely through the evil days. After a year of diligent repression the Government had to confess that the impression made upon the movement was insignificant.

Meanwhile, in the hope of checking Socialist propagandism still further, an attack had been made upon two of the most valued immunities of parliamentary deputies. The imperial constitution provided that no deputy might be arrested or imprisoned for any offence during session except with the assent of the Diet, unless he were taken while committing the act or on the day following. When, therefore, a letter was read to the Diet in February, 1879, in which the Berlin President of Police asked for permission to arrest two members who perversely continued to attend its sittings notwithstanding that notices of expulsion from Berlin had been served upon them, angry cries of "The constitution!" were raised. The idea of using the Socialist Law for the purpose of preventing members from attending to their parliamentary duties strained the patience of all but the feudal Conservatives, and the permission sought was promptly refused.

The second attack upon the constitution was even more daring. Free speech having been denied to Socialists in public meeting and party print, an attempt was made to deprive them of it in the Diet. It was easy for the police authorities to silence public agitators by expelling or imprisoning them; what they could not do under the

exceptional law was to prevent Socialist deputies from talking to their hearts' content from their places in parliament or the party newspapers from publishing the speeches so made, however violent and provocative, for these rights were secured by the constitution. Outside, the free speech of a Bebel or a Liebknecht was at the mercy of any police inspector who chose to regard his words as injurious to social harmony; in the Diet both Government and Speaker were powerless to prevent the open avowal of the most outspoken Socialism. That was one of the safeguards of free parliamentary discussion, introduced into the constitution not without protests from reactionaries at the time, and now destined to convert the Diet into a city of refuge for the political outlaws when able to claim sanctuary nowhere else. Now this valued right was challenged. In March a bill was introduced at Bismarck's instigation giving the Diet power to punish by censure, obligatory apology, or expulsion for a fixed period any deputy who abused his parliamentary position, such disciplinary measures to be applied by a committee of thirteen. It was also proposed that the Diet should at its discretion sit *in camera* and suppress the publication of its proceedings. This power was to be exercised for two years. Members debated the Muzzling Bill for three days before rejecting it, but it never had a moment's chance of success. Even the Chancellor was at last reduced to the necessity of apologizing for it. During the same session the Berlin police sought the Diet's approval of the arrest and prosecution of one Socialist deputy (Hasselmann) and the expulsion from the metropolis of another (Fritzsche) on account of an offence against the Socialist Law of the previous year. This proposal likewise was warmly resented, Gneist, the constitutional historian, leading the attack against it, and was negatived. In January, 1882, a Socialist deputy was arrested at Stuttgart during session in violation of the constitution, but as a result of an interpellation he was promptly released.

The provocative policy followed by the Government led to retaliatory measures. There had always been in the Socialist ranks a section favourable to violent measures. Now the advocates of force asserted themselves, and under the leadership of Johann Most and Wilhelm Hasselmann they urged, at a secret conference held at Wahren, in Saxony, in September, 1879, that the movement should frankly aim at revolution. Most had just established the journal

Freiheit in London with the motto "All measures are lawful against tyrants," and in it the man. who had been wont to harangue the working-men of Berlin on the theme "Think and thought will conquer" now proclaimed the sole efficacy of dynamite and the bomb. The Wahren conference decided to adhere to constitutional methods, and from that time the physical force party went its own way. A year later, at a conference held in Wyden, in Switzerland, Most and Hasselmann were disowned, and there was a formal split.

Early in 1880 the time came for renewing the Socialist Law. The Government was not able to report hopefully upon the results of its policy of repression. It had used its exceptional powers rigorously, but the only visible effect had been to force agitation underground, compel the Socialists to change the character and centres of their organization and agitation, and to make out of simple working-class leaders martyrs and popular heroes. The Government wished for the renewal of the law until April, 1886, but the Diet would not go beyond three years. The majority in its favour was larger than before – 191 against 94 – though in a smaller House; this time thirteen Clericals voted with the Government.

The assassination of Czar Alexander II in St. Petersburg by Nihilists on March 13, 1881, convinced Bismarck that he was still dealing too mildly with a movement which at any time might lead to regicide at home. The Emperor urged him to try once more to unite the European Governments in a common plan of action. "The chief thing," he wrote, "is to induce England, Switzerland, and France, which have hitherto offered asylum to the perpetrators of political murders, to enact laws for putting an end to this mischief." In other words, these countries were to alter their criminal laws to suit the necessities of Germany and Russia, to make themselves accomplices of methods of government of which they could not approve, and to assume responsibility for their evil effects. Bismarck opened negotiations, and with his encouragement the Russian Government invited the principal States to confer at Brussels. The three Eastern Empires agreed, but the two Western Powers and the minor States declined, and the conference was not held. The small result of a great design was that Germany and Russia concluded an extradition and dynamite treaty and agreed to assist one another in combating the enemies of their peace and order, just as they had done at the time of the Polish rising in 1863.

In October of the same year the Diet was re-elected, with results discouraging to the Government. Free trade had in the meantime been abandoned without a definite national mandate, and the fiscal issue overshadowed all other questions, with the result that there was a strong movement to the left. The Conservative parties were decimated; the National Liberals went into the contest divided over the question of Protection, and one-half of their former seats went to the Radicals; the Clericals largely increased their strength; and even the Socialists regained the ground lost in 1878. The Socialist gains were accompanied by a large decrease of votes; but this was to be explained by the difficulty of putting forward candidates and generally of fighting elections at a time when voters who avowed attachment to Socialism risked both liberty and livelihood. Two years later anarchism showed its face in Germany, first in the form of a dynamite outrage in an Elberfeld restaurant in September, 1883, and at the end of the same month of an attempt to blow up the imperial family on the occasion of the festive inauguration of the Niederwald monument on the Rhine. The Niederwald plot was devised with astonishing clumsiness, and the evil designs of its authors were brought home in the course of a long trial to three of them, of whom two suffered the capital penalty and the other was sentenced to imprisonment for life.

The effect upon the Government and the police authorities of these crimes was to redouble their vigilance and rigour, and no quarter was shown to Socialist advocacy in any form. Leader after leader was imprisoned, until the parliamentary party had dwindled into a handful, while known agitators were unsparingly harried across the frontiers. The labour leaders who to-day fill Ministerial portfolios and sit in Kings' houses, who promulgate political programmes from their armchairs and direct popular movements through the telephone, have little conception of what the life of the German Socialist pioneers was half a century and even a generation ago, of the persecutions they had to endure, of the sacrifice and privation required of them every day and hour. Many of them, driven from their fatherland, wandered for years over Western Europe, homeless and friendless, seeking brief covert wherever it might be found, yet followed everywhere by the sleuth-hounds of a vindictive police system which lorded it in the seat of justice. They may have been fanatical, their ideas confused, their

methods violent, their speech rude and provocative; yet at least these men were in their way idealists, upright in purpose and desperately in earnest, and they literally pledged their strength and hearts' blood to a cause which to them stood for justice and right-doing. Yet again, as in the case of the struggle with the Roman Catholic Church, repression defeated its own object. The Socialist movement still grew, merely accumulating in the time of restraint a force which, when set free, was to give to it a new and stronger momentum.

In May of 1884 the Socialist Law was prolonged. The Centre, without whose support a majority in its favour was impossible, was divided, Windthorst, its leader, being against further repression, of which he thought that both the Roman Catholics and the Socialists had had sufficient. The Government now would not accept amendments, however, and it was only by a unique feat in cross-voting – many Radicals supporting the law and many Clericals opposing it – that the requisite majority was obtained. The extension was for two years. In 1886 the Government wished to prolong the law for five years, but again the Diet adhered to two, and the same proposal was made with the same result in January, 1888, when the law was renewed for the last time.

PROTECTION AND FISCAL REFORM, 1879-1887

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SATISFIED THAT HE HAD put the Socialists in their right place in relation to public law and decorum, Bismarck proceeded to restore order in another part of the national house. The year which followed the passing of the anti-Socialist Law saw the reform of the fiscal system, a task still greater, calling for statesmanship of a more delicate kind and charged with consequences at least as far-reaching, though in other directions.

To regard this episode, as is often done, as an abrupt and violent new departure is to misunderstand and undervalue its significance. The introduction of protective legislation in 1879 was in reality the revival of a national tradition. This tradition had been based on the example of Prussia, where the protection of trade, industry, and agriculture had been the careful aim of public policy from the time of Frederick the Great. Not only did that ruler erect fiscal barriers upon his frontiers for the purpose of restricting imports, but his edicts went so far as to forbid the introduction of every class of goods which could be produced at home, even if less cheaply and of inferior quality. On the other hand, the exportation of raw material was forbidden in the interest of cheap production. By subsidies he established new industries, and encouraged old industries which languished. If the foreigner's goods were not desired, the foreigner himself was welcomed, provided only that he brought with him manufacturing skill and knowledge. The State was ever ready with liberal gifts or temporary loans for the purchase of raw materials, and it was quick to recognize the value of technical training, introducing for the purpose foreign teachers. Agriculture was likewise supported in every suitable way. The great landowners were checked with a firm hand; the small peasant proprietors were encouraged to ways of enterprise and thrift; and the condition of the serfs was ameliorated in the rough spirit of an age to which the ideas of liberty, equality, and fraternity were still alien.

If the material prosperity of the Prussian monarchy was checked between the death of this benevolent autocrat in 1786 and the issue of the Emancipatory Edicts of Stein and Hardenberg, the decline must be attributed in part to the political troubles of the time, but in a larger degree to the untoward fate which placed the destinies of the country for eleven fateful years in the hands of perhaps the weakest member of the Hohenzollern race, Frederick William II, years which saw the

abandonment by the Crown of the ardent and unwearying solicitude for the nation's economic welfare which was so important a feature of the earlier strong, if arbitrary, rule.

It has been shown in earlier pages how Prussia, from the second decade of last century forward, after sweeping away the fiscal barriers which prevented the free exchange of commodities within her own territories, won the secondary and minor German States, one by one, for a Customs Union which was intended ultimately to comprehend the whole of Germany proper. By the middle of the century this movement towards fiscal unity had made such progress that of the States comprised in the Germanic Federation only the Mecklenburgs and the Hanseatic Cities, with Austria, remained outside. Without becoming an integral part of the Union, however, Austria concluded a twelve years' treaty with it in February, 1853, on the principle of reciprocal preferential treatment. Within the Union customs duties were levied on the common account, and divided amongst the treaty States according to population.

The Customs Union treaty was renewed for the last time in 1865. No sooner had it been done, however, than it lapsed owing to the succeeding internecine war and the consequent formation of the North German Confederation. In the following year, by treaty between the Confederation and the South German States, a new Union was formed, again for twelve years, with a Customs Parliament consisting of the North German Diet enlarged for customs questions only by the addition of deputies from the South. Four years later the laws and regulations of the Customs Union, as then modified, passed into the legislation of the German Empire, which had just been established, and be came substantially the basis of the fiscal system which lasted until 1879. Only the Free Cities of Hamburg and Bremen were now excluded in virtue of the option, secured to them by the constitution, of remaining outside the customs area until they were disposed to seek admission of their own accord.

Throughout the history of the Customs Union there had been a steady tendency favourable to freer commercial intercourse with foreign countries, and this tendency found expression in lower duties. England adopted Free Trade in 1846, and the example of the first mercantile and industrial country of the world had great influence upon German statesmen and public opinion. Several years later the

textile manufacturers of Saxony were won over to the new doctrine, and in 1848 even the agricultural societies of that kingdom petitioned the Frankfort Parliament against customs duties of all kinds. The iron manufacturers of the West and South, however, still continued predominantly Protectionist.

Amongst publicists and in academic circles there had in the meantime grown up a vigorous Liberalistic school, whose leaders included John Prince Smith, an Englishman by birth, who settled in Germany, and was later elected both to the Prussian and Imperial Diets; W. A. Lette, a Prussian State official; Max Wirth, honourably associated with the Trade Union movement; Otto Michaelis, an able economic writer, who ended his career as Prussian Minister of Finance; Schulze-Delitzsch, already named as the founder of co-operation in Germany; and Julius Faucher, for some years a leader of the Progressive party in the Prussian Diet. At the instigation of Prince Smith and Faucher, a Free Trade party was organized in Berlin, and its influence gradually extended from North Germany to other parts of the country. Prince Smith especially was unwearied in the agitation which he carried on both by speech and writing on behalf of the economic theories which had just won so signal a triumph in England. He travelled over a large part of the country as an apostle of the Free Trade gospel, imparting everywhere some at least of his own enthusiasm and conviction, organizing societies, encouraging the establishment of literary sheets in the service of the new faith, and successfully identifying economic with political and Parliamentary Liberalism. He contended for the immediate introduction of complete Free Trade, without half measures or compromise of any kind. To those who, only partially convinced of the unwisdom of a protective policy, pleaded for slow and cautious progress in the new direction, he replied that any dallying with Protection was a mere protraction of economic injury. It was, he said, like docking a dog's tail an inch a day, just to spare its feelings. So far did his temporary influence go, that at the beginning of the 'sixties he was able to convince some of the agricultural societies of West and East Prussia – later a hot-bed of extreme Protectionism and agrarianism – that their truest interest was to be sought in a policy of free imports.

Free Trade principles also found expression in the Economic Congress formed in 1858 by Lette, Wirth, Victor Böhmert, and

Pickford, another Englishman, which first met at Gotha, and in the German Commercial Diet, or national federation of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

The economic life of the country underwent a powerful development at this time. During a long period of peace, bought at the cost of much political humiliation at Austria's hands, industry had prospered and trade expanded both at home and abroad. The factory system was rapidly coming in; the great inventions which had revolutionized manufacturing processes in the staple industries of England had been welcomed from abroad; English capital, brains, and initiative were busily engaged in creating in Germany industries which were at a later date to prove a sore trial of endurance and capacity at home. At the world exhibitions held in London in 1851 and in Paris four years later German goods were prominently and creditably represented. Yet up to that time English manufacturers viewed with curiosity rather than alarm the rise of the young competitor whose ambitions were still too modest to justify his being regarded as a serious rival.

So great had become the demand of the factories and workshops for labour that agriculture for a time ran short, in spite of the growth of population, though it still maintained quite one-half of the population. For agriculture, too, had likewise moved with the times. In Prussia particularly a new generation had come into possession of the soil since the emancipation of the peasantry, and its energies were stimulated and fructified by the consciousness of freedom and by the enlarging influence of education, long compulsory throughout the monarchy and now nominally free. The peasant had become a new man, with larger hopes and a wider outlook, while the knowledge that he worked now for himself, his family, and the future encouraged him to greater enterprise. The number of small proprietors and holders increased greatly, except in the East, where the large landowners continued supreme. Year after year a larger area was brought under cultivation and the land cultivated gave a larger yield.

A more decided step towards Free Trade was taken when by the commercial treaty of February, 1853, Prussia and Austria agreed to levy corn duties no longer against each other. In 1856 the Customs Union tariff was further reduced, but it was the conclusion by Prussia in 1862 of a commercial treaty with France – following one concluded

by England with the same country two years before – which came into operation throughout the whole area of the Union in 1865, that gave the greatest practical stimulus to the new movement. Bismarck found the treaty ready drawn up when he became Minister-President in the autumn of 1862, but it fell to him to carry it through Parliament, and while it is true that the treaty belonged to the period of his official life when, as he frequently said in after years, his economic conscience was in the keeping of others, the reasons which influenced him in accepting it were in the main political. When the episode was later mentioned during a discussion in the Diet (February 21, 1879) in proof of changed convictions, be retorted that convictions had nothing to do with the matter; the treaty, he said, was meant to be a weapon for use against Austria. Whatever the immediate purpose of the French treaty, it unquestionably committed Germany to further progress on Free Trade lines, while its effects upon her foreign trade were very marked. The tariff was again revised, and now in a decidedly liberal spirit. The duties on corn and flour, for example, were repealed altogether, while other duties were greatly reduced.

When the Empire was established in 1871, therefore, little was wanting to complete the transition to freedom of trade. The corn duties had gone, such of the industrial duties as remained were now nominal in amount, and the protective aspect of the tariff had given place to the purely financial. Then in 1873 the duties on iron and steel goods were reduced to rates varying from 1s. to 2s. 6d. a cwt., and two years later the Diet was persuaded to adopt a resolution approving of their total abolition as from the first day of 1877. The final abandonment of Protection was the work of three Prussian Ministers, Rudolf Delbrück, Otto von Camphausen and August von der Heydt, of whom the first two still remained in office.

German politics is so much an affair of the Government, so little one of the nation and of public opinion, that Bismarck, immersed in foreign affairs, and bearing upon his shoulders the entire burden of their complex and manifold problems, had failed to notice that this gradual rupture of the old tradition had aroused widespread dissatisfaction. The year which was to have seen the disappearance of the last vestige of Protection witnessed instead a vigorous reaction against Free Trade. During 1876 the iron and steel industries organized themselves for mutual defence, and urgently petitioned the

Government to refrain from putting into effect the impending repeal of the iron duties. Delbrück's influence was still at that time paramount upon economic issues, and the petition was rejected, but this victory of Liberalism in the Ministry was its last. The agrarians also moved in sympathy. Hitherto they had raised no objection to the policy of open frontiers, and as late as 1876 had advocated the abolition of customs and duties of all kinds. Now they began to clamour for a return to the good old days of a closed market and steady and ample prices.

The strongest impulses behind the reaction originated in the severe commercial depression which set in directly the first wave of prosperity caused by the war of 1870 had exhausted itself. Industry had at first taken a great leap forward. To the political influences which favoured an awakening of economic life came the stimulus of the French milliards. Thanks to the wonderful elasticity of the conquered nation, the instalments were paid long before they were due, and they had to be expended far too precipitately for Germany's good. Prince Bismarck once spoke of the war indemnity as an acute embarrassment for the time being, and a German writer has said: "It broke over us like a water-spout, carrying great devastation everywhere, whereas if it had fallen gradually, and in small quantities, it might have been beneficial in an extraordinary degree."

Germany's position was that of a young and inexperienced heir who has unexpectedly come into a large fortune. Thoughtful men had warned the nation of the dangers involved in the dispersal of so large a sum of money. When in 1872 negotiations were begun with France with a view to the acceleration of the payment of the indemnity, and the practical men of affairs who had the transaction in hand were rubbing their hands in glee over their shrewdness, it was a theorist, Dr. Ludwig Bamberger, who urged the risks of the course contemplated and predicted demoralizing national extravagance and ultimate financial catastrophe from the too rapid flow of wealth into new Germany. The money was paid, however, and it had to be spent. The millions of pounds which were expended by the various Governments on public works – fortifications, barracks, munitions, railways and their equipment, public buildings, dockyards and ships, mines and workshops – circulated in a thousand channels and fertilized industrial and commercial enterprise of every kind. From

factory and workshop everywhere the cry rose for labour, and responding to it the rural population flocked to the towns. Thus it was that the era of industrial enterprise was also an era of town building. The inevitable effect of this abnormal activity was a sudden rise in values. Raw materials, both home and foreign, were needed in unexampled quantities, and because the want was great and urgent, every seller demanded high prices and every buyer was willing to pay them. Wages and salaries increased in response to the quickened demand for labour and service, and it was said that during the three years following the return of the victorious armies from France there was a greater advance in the general standard of life than in the whole of the preceding generation.

Unfortunately the garish structure of national prosperity proved to have been built upon unstable foundations. An economic development legitimate in origin, and beneficial so long as it followed healthy lines, culminated in excesses of a lamentable kind. Even to-day, after the lapse of over forty years, the great company frauds which fell to that time are vividly remembered in Germany as the national counterpart of the famous South Sea Bubble. Suddenly everybody seemed to have money to spare, and there was no lack of cunning rogues eager and able to take care of it. The promotion of companies reached unheard-of proportions. More blast furnaces, iron works, and machine works were established in Prussia during the years 1871 to 1874 than in all the preceding seventy years.

An ignoble scramble for illicit wealth arose. The Jews revelled in it, but the Christians were not slow to emulate them; and members of all grades of the aristocracy were as ready to clutch at dishonest gain as the professional sharper whose only capital were his wits. At that time of perverted morals, it even happened that State officials were proved guilty of granting concessions to railway adventurers under questionable circumstances, of aiding and abetting in the evasion of the company law, and of receiving commission for valuable services rendered to company promoters in an official capacity; while in one notorious case – that of Councillor of State Wagener, of earlier *Kreuzzeitung* fame – public opinion was only satisfied when the offender had been dismissed from his post. Other men of hitherto honoured name and reputation soiled the one and lost the other past recovery by complicity in transactions which only escaped punishment

because of loopholes in the law. It was the merit of Dr. Lasker that at that time he exposed the facility with which fraud could be perpetrated under legal forms, and gave the impetus to a reform of criminal law which made it more difficult for dishonest men to thrive.

The people who chiefly benefited were the promoters, directors, bankers, middlemen, and, in many cases, their tools – the people whose undertakings were bought far beyond their value in order that they might be sold to the public at a further largely enhanced price. Many an unlettered peasant who had tilled his own land in the neighbourhood of Berlin and other large towns became suddenly wealthy, and was able to spend the rest of his days in enervating luxury, by selling his property to a land development company, which promptly resold it to the public at an unconscionable profit. From that time dated the building banks and estate and land development companies which have been the bane of German municipal life, since to their unprincipled speculation are due in large measure the bad housing and high rents common to so many large towns.

The crash came towards the end of 1873, and month after month the devastation increased until it overspread the whole country. Hundreds of large company undertakings which, if honestly financed and conducted, would have brought legitimate gain to their shareholders and profit to the community – railways, mines, banks, manufactories, building enterprises – came to a sudden standstill, their employees being thrown upon the streets, and the savings of thousands of investors, large and small, squandered. Nowhere did the gold fever and the subsequent disaster reach dimensions so great as in Berlin, yet there was hardly a large town in Germany which did not suffer. Writing several years later, a historian of the period said: "Wherever we look, on all sides, the wounds caused by the cruel year 1873 still bleed. Thousands of existences are broken, countless thousands are severely injured; suffering, care, want and despair knock at the doors and have become daily guests in hut and palace. All of us have suffered more or less, whether we gambled with the promoters and bought their dear wares or not; for our daily necessities are dearer and our business lies low." Side by side with evils of an economic character came the inevitable moral *sequelæ* of widespread social disturbance, and the records of fraud, violent crime, and suicide reflected the material pressure under which large sections of the

population struggled.

From the industrial standpoint it was the hopeless condition of the iron and textile trades at that time which principally determined the return to Protection. The iron and steel and allied industries had shared liberally in the distribution of the French milliards, but directly the abnormal expenditure on State and public works ceased stagnation began, and many industrialists found themselves in possession of works and plants which had been built or extended on an excessive scale in order to meet what had proved to be a temporary and transient spell of prosperity. In 1873 over-production had reached such a limit in the iron trade that Lotz estimates that the smelting and rolling works of Germany were then producing iron enough to cover the demand of the entire world. Prices sank ruinously; having reached their highest in 1873, they fell in the following year to one-half and later to one-third of the maximum figures. On the other hand, the textile trade had suffered owing to the incorporation in the Empire of the large and progressive weaving and spinning industries of Alsace, whose production, hitherto sold to France, was now largely thrown upon the German market, so that the less efficient manufacturers of Saxony found themselves face to face with a new and severe competition.

Agriculture had benefited for the time by the increased consuming capacity of the community, but the subsequent reaction involved it in the general misfortune. Prices fell, and with them land values, and where leases lapsed rents fell in sympathy. Up to 1874, both values and rent had steadily risen, but then came the climax, and after it the decline. Apart from the depression in home industry and trade, the corn-growers had to contend with severer competition from abroad, favoured by improved ocean transport and railway facilities. Germany was now steadily becoming less an exporting and more an importing country.

Such being the economic condition of Germany in the early ‘seventies, and remembering that these years had marked a clear departure from Protection, nothing was more likely than that, reasoning *a priori,* the industries which had fallen on evil days should unite in casting the blame on the new-fangled policy of Free Trade.

It would not be strictly correct to say that in embarking upon a policy of fiscal reform Bismarck only sought for a justification of that

policy when he had already adopted it. It is nevertheless true that his ideas on the subject were at first vague and indefinite, and that he repeatedly changed his ground and modified his measures. He never concealed the fact that on political questions he was an opportunist. Contemptuous of theories, and convinced that political action must be determined solely by interest, it was not difficult to detach himself from his earlier preconceptions and to revert to the old Prussian tradition.

He has said that the year 1877 marked for him a turning- point in German fiscal policy. It was his recognition of the prevailing acute depression, as evidenced by the stagnation of the staple industries, the wholesale damping down of blast furnaces, and the impoverishment of the working classes, that led him to ask whether Free Trade was proving the national boon which it had been represented. Hitherto he had never given any thought to the merits of the question. “For the first fifteen years of my Ministerial life,” he said, “I was absorbed in foreign affairs and did not regard it as my business to trouble myself seriously about the domestic policy of the Empire, nor had I the time; I assumed also that it was in good hands. Afterwards, when the men whom I needed failed me, I was compelled to look at the matter myself, and . . . I formed the opinion that under the Free Trade system introduced in 1865 we fell into atrophy, which was only relieved for a time by the new blood that came with the French indemnity, and that it was necessary to apply a remedy.” To the reproach that he had changed his mind, and was now disowning his earlier economic theories, especially as avowed in 1862, he replied: “I should be proud if I could say that I held any economic theories at all in those days, but I must confess to my shame that I had none.”

Already in 1877 he had set his Press and Press agents to work, and all the other influences at the Government’s command when “public opinion” had to be formed were being actively mobilized. Prince Hohenlohe notes in his Diary that in the autumn of that year Jewish bankers in Berlin, taking a hint from above, were busily making propaganda for the coming economic departure. Before anything could be done, however, it was evident that new Ministers would be needed. Ever since 1867 Bismarck’s right hand had been Rudolf Delbrück. He became the first President of the Federal Chancellery Office in the Government of the North German Confederation in that

year, and a Prussian Minister in 1868, and on the establishment of the Empire he retained both offices. His influence in the Government was second only to that of Bismarck himself. A Liberal and an individualist, he had throughout directed fiscal policy in Liberal channels. Accepting now the necessity of financial reform, he nevertheless still clung to the idea of revenue taxes, and had no thought of abandoning the principles of Free Trade, to which he had only just succeeded in giving full play. Up to 1875 Bismarck agreed with him; he was, indeed, already wishful to go further than his colleague in developing the indirect taxes, yet, up to this point, only with a view to revenue and not as a measure of protection. It did not take Delbrück long, however, to discover that Bismarck and he were traversing paths which were certain to go more and more apart. Bismarck, too, soon recognized that the difference between himself and his valued colleague was one of principle and therefore allowed of no compromise.

In June, 1876, Delbrück resigned office, and a little later secured election to the Imperial Diet, where he continued to oppose the new policy earnestly, yet with dignity. Bismarck would have made great sacrifices rather than have lost the help of this trusted adviser and able administrator, and his resignation was one of the few defections which, in the course of his long Ministerial life, actually grieved him. He had been so fully occupied with foreign questions that he was only too glad to have at his side a Minister of Delbrück's marked ability, a man full of initiative, a fierce worker, and a comrade of unflinching loyalty. Delbrück's jurisdiction and powers were defined neither by laws nor regulations, and it was natural that he came to exercise a sort of dictatorship within the sphere assigned to him. In fiscal questions in particular Bismarck neither agreed with nor differed from his colleague; he simply accepted his opinions and acts as those of an oracle. "My recognition of his authority was so great," he said on one occasion (December 1, 1881), "that, in view of the importance and technical superiority of this colleague whom I had no wish to lose, I immediately suppressed the grave doubts which I began to entertain as to whether we were on the right path." Even now no shadow of personal antipathy fell upon their relationships.

German economists of the Free Trade school have often contended that the departure from the old protectionist lines was made too

quickly and at last too completely. Albert Schäffle held that both sides went to extremes, and that if a moderate course had been taken not only in 1879 but earlier the result might have been a wider Customs Union, embracing Austria, on the basis of moderate protection, instead of the succession of tariff wars which fell to later years. It is certain that when Delbrück resigned the extent of the contemplated change had not been settled, and Bismarck professed to believe that his colleague had been unduly alarmed. It is conceivable that if Delbrück had remained the Protectionist party might have been kept for a long time under check. Nevertheless, with his resignation Bismarck's principal motive for moderation disappeared, and he speedily came round to the view that if protection was to be effective it must be thorough.

At this stage occurred an unexpected check, which, had Bismarck been a weaker man, might have shaken his resolve and deterred him altogether from making so momentous a departure. Harassed by ill-health and political perplexities, the longing for rest again came over him early in 1877, and on March 20th he tendered his resignation. This time he was in earnest, and it was only the Emperor's emphatic "Never!" – interpreting the alarm which the bare rumour of a change of Chancellor had created in the country – that put the idea out of his mind. Nevertheless, he was persuaded to pass the remainder of the year in retirement at Varzin. There he worked out the broad outlines of a large scheme of fiscal reform, and when he returned to Berlin in the following February he immediately threw himself with characteristic vigour into this new campaign. In the interval he had twice attempted to induce the National Liberal leader, Rudolf von Bennigsen, on the whole the most statesmanlike figure in the Diet, to take office as successor to Count Friedrich Eulenburg, whom he was prepared to supplant on the ground of his failing health. When the overtures were first made to him in July, Bennigsen had received them favourably, but had imposed the condition that he should take with him into the Cabinet two Liberal colleagues, Forckenbeck and Stauffenberg, the one as Minister of the Interior and the other as head of the Imperial Treasury. Such a leaven of Liberalism would have entailed a clear break with the past policy of the Government, and to that Bismarck was opposed. The negotiations, therefore, broke down. In December they were reopened, and now Eulenburg, displeased by

the prospect of being sacrificed for Bismarck's convenience, disclosed them to the Emperor, who rebuked his Minister, in a letter of unusual asperity, for having dared to discuss behind his back a transaction of such importance. Highly mortified by the affront, Bismarck renewed his resignation, but a prompt letter of contrition from the same hand led to its withdrawal. As Bennigsen still declined to enter office alone, the incident had no further consequence.

One other serious obstacle remained in the way of advance, and it was his Liberal colleague and deputy in the presidency of the Prussian Ministry, Otto von Camphausen, who since 1873 had been Minister of Finance, and as such had been responsible for imperial finance. His was what Bismarck was wont to call "a subaltern nature," and it was his chief's special complaint against him that he deliberately hid his head in the sand, refused to face the accumulating difficulties of his department, and looked to the head of the Ministry to do his work. After he had long and vainly pressed Camphausen to produce some practical scheme of taxation reform, Bismarck determined at last to bring his policy of procrastination to an end. In a letter written from his Varzin retreat on December 21, 1877, he told his easy-going colleague: "It is a complete confusion of ideas that the Finance Minister should expect from the President a programme for his own Ministry, on the understanding that after examining it he will reserve criticism. On the contrary, the preparation of a programme for discussion is the duty of the Finance Minister himself. It is not my business as President of the Prussian Ministry either to invent or to advocate financial programmes; I am responsible only for seeing that the office of Minister of Finance is filled in a way agreeable to the general policy of the Ministry."

In face of so direct an injunction either to act himself or make room for some one who would, Camphausen set to work, and before many weeks had passed produced a series of measures which, if approved, might have relieved the Empire for a long time of its money difficulties. The principal proposal was the higher taxation of tobacco; but it was also hoped to obtain a much larger revenue by the taxation of lotteries, playing cards, and Stock Exchange contracts. Unhappily for its author the plan completely miscarried. Of the several proposals made to it the Diet, to Bismarck's disgust, adopted only a trumpery tax on playing-cards. The measure upon which his principal expectations

had been built, the increase of the tobacco duties, fared the worst; this was rejected by a large majority, which included the National Liberals and the Radicals, who had been frightened by the Chancellor's premature avowal that he was feeling his way towards a State monopoly in tobacco.

Although the taxation scheme failed, however, it had two important results: it led to the resignation of Camphausen, whose half-hearted interest in Bismarck's fiscal reform plans had encouraged the Opposition, and it made clear and unambiguous the attitude of political parties on the question. Bismarck expended no regrets over his vanished colleague. Referring to Camphausen's retirement several years later, he reproached him with obstinate adhesion to old ways and an unconquerable conviction that nothing in his system of ideas was capable of improvement; he was "as convinced as God Himself on the sixth day of the creation that everything was very good."

Camphausen having gone, and Bennigsen having failed him, Bismarck in reconstructing the Ministry looked for colleagues who could be relied on to support the new policy without troubling him with scruples and reservations. Camphausen was succeeded by Arthur Hobrecht, who had been Chief Mayor of Berlin, and had hitherto sat in the Prussian Diet as a National Liberal, and Count Friedrich Eulenburg and Achenbach gave place to Count Botha Eulenburg and Count Stolberg, the latter becoming Vice-President of the Prussian Ministry and Vice-Chancellor.

Although Protection was now Bismarck's goal, his object was at first and for a long time purely fiscal; he wished to reform the system of imperial taxation in order to provide the Empire with a sufficient revenue, and so to make it independent of the States and their Legislatures. In the forefront of domestic needs he had for years placed fiscal reform in this sense. "The entire reform of taxation, inclusive of the customs duties – who does not wish it?" he said in the Diet on November 22, 1875, "but it is a Herculean work which one must have touched experimentally as a comparative layman in these matters, such as I am, in order to really comprehend its difficulties." The strongest of his convictions, in holding which he never wavered, was the superiority of indirect to direct taxation.

The Imperial constitution adopted in 1871 had provided that in so far as the expenditure of the Empire was not covered by revenues set

apart for its special use – in the main, certain customs, excise, and stamp duties, and the profits of the Post Office – the deficiency should be made up by contributions from the Federal States, levied according to population. These were the "matricular contributions" known both to the Germanic Federation and the old Empire, and their aggregate amount was fixed in the budget each year. These contributions were not intended, originally, to be permanent, but merely to tide the Empire over the early days, until more suitable and more popular sources of revenue could be found. Nevertheless, for a long time they had occupied a far more prominent place in the budget than had been contemplated. Instead of being a stop-gap, they threatened to become a mainstay of imperial finance. Bismarck had always chafed under this system of State maintenance, which he regarded as undignified and as partaking of the character of charity. The Empire's position was that of the young man who on coming of age is bidden to remember the dignity of man's estate, but is still kept in pecuniary dependence – expected to cut a creditable figure in the world and to spend freely, yet not allowed to pay his own bills.

On the other hand, the States objected to the contributions because of the violent fluctuations to which they were exposed – a disadvantage doubly serious in those States whose budgets were fixed for several years at a time – and of the inequity of the principle upon which they were levied, which was the crude principle of population. With the latter objection in particular Bismarck fully sympathized. "It can hardly be denied," he said (November 22, 1875), "that the form of matricular assessment is one which does not fall on the States equitably, according to their capacity to pay. If, however, a tax is acknowledged to be unjust, it does not, from my standpoint as Imperial Chancellor, belong to the things which consolidate the Empire." He was still haunted by the dread of the "centrifugal elements" which did not share his own attachment to the Empire or his own conviction of its permanency. The spirit of particularism was not dead, and he desired to make the Empire as independent as possible by placing it in possession of ample and elastic resources. He did not want the citizens of the new Confederation to be perpetually asking themselves as they reckoned out the incidence of the matricular contributions, "What does the new Empire cost us, and is it worth the price?" The financial aspect of empire he therefore wished

once for all to force into the background. He may also have been influenced by a wish to break the power of the Diet over finance, so that when he spoke of the desirability of the Empire being financially independent he meant by the Empire the Executive, and by independence freedom from parliamentary control. Certainly the popular parties favoured the retention of the matricular contributions just because they emphasized the Government's dependence upon the Diet for money, and hence preserved effectively the Diet's constitutional right to control the budget.

Attempts had already been made to dispense with these contributions by the introduction of new and the increase of existing taxes and duties, but never with lasting success, for sooner or later the ever-growing expenditure exhausted the new revenue, and the obnoxious poll-tax remained as before. Worse still, since 1876 there had been deficits, leading to borrowing, a practice to which, though no financier, Bismarck was opposed. A man who in all his dealings was thoroughgoing, he had no patience with the policy of covering up unpleasant facts. If the national revenue was not sufficient to meet the national needs, the only proper thing was to make it so, instead of hiding the deficiency and pretending that all was well. Down to 1878, however, Bismarck and the Federal Government did not seriously contemplate a measure of industrial and agricultural protection. The revision of the tariff was already determined on, but it was to be undertaken solely in the interest of revenue. In August the Finance Ministers of the various States met in conference at Heidelberg, and here likewise the same views were represented and the same intention adhered to. Their report merely recommended the increase of the imperial revenue by means of a tobacco duty and of revenue duties on certain suitable articles.

It was at this point that the question was taken out of Bismarck's hands, to be developed and settled in a way which hitherto he had not seriously anticipated. For the friends of reaction in the Diet had meantime been active. They recognized that the moment was propitious for a return to the policy discarded under Delbrück's influence, and thanks to the promptitude and vigour of their intervention, they were able to create the impetus which sent the Chancellor, while still wavering with open mind, clear across the border-line which divided fiscal from protective policy.

The composition of the Diet was favourable to such a course. The election which followed the two attempts made in 1878 upon the life of the Emperor William I placed the Liberal parties in a minority. The two Conservative groups numbered 78 in the House of 1877, but 116 in that of 1878; while the National Liberals fell from 128 to 99 and the Radicals and the Socialists from 51 to 36. The Ultramontane Centre controlled 93 votes. The outlook of Liberalism was therefore gloomy. It was clear that the Conservatives would have to form the backbone of the new Government majority; the only doubtful question was, who would be their partners, the National Liberals or the Clericals, for one of these groups would be necessary in order to create the requisite majority.

For a time the attitude of the National Liberals seemed uncertain. Accepted by Bismarck as a Ministerial party in 1867, they had become so accustomed to regard themselves as the main pillar of the State that the idea of taking a second place was unwelcome to them. They no longer held the leading position in the Diet, and now they were faced by the alternatives of retiring into the shades of opposition or accepting a policy with which, as a party, they did not agree. When the alliance with Bismarck was concluded twelve years before there were amongst them sturdy democrats who viewed co-operation with a reactionary Minister with suspicion, and these men had often chafed under a yoke which had committed them to a course of action in which there was far more Nationalism than Liberalism. Yet having already given up their political cloak, they were now invited to surrender their economic coat also.

While the National Liberals were still considering what their collective attitude should be, the constitution of the Ministerial majority which was to carry through the impending changes was decided by the formation of the Free Economic Union of the Diet, an association of 204 deputies, of whom 95 were Conservatives, 87 Clericals, 27 National Liberals, and the remainder members of minor fractions. This body on October 17th published a formal declaration pledging itself to the advocacy of fiscal reform on protectionist principles. The declaration was believed to have received the sanction, and it was certainly issued with the knowledge, of the Chancellor, whose position and resolve it greatly strengthened. Here was a majority which was to be had for the mere taking, for it had literally

thrown itself at his feet; with 204 votes, at the least, at his disposal, he would be able to carry whatever reforms he pleased. Accordingly he let it be known that if the Conservatives and Clericals wished to work with him their assistance would be welcome.

Thus encouraged, Bismarck on November 12th formally proposed to the Federal Council that a commission of fifteen members should be appointed to revise the tariff by the aid of such advice as they chose to take, and when this had been done he laid before the Council an exhaustive memorial in which he discussed the question of fiscal reform in great detail and disclosed his proposals with the utmost frankness. Even in this memorial he repeated that financial reform was his special concern, and pointed out that what he desired was not heavier but juster taxation. “The financial reform whose realization the revision of the customs tariff is intended to help does not consist in the increase of the necessary burdens required by the needs of the Empire and the States, but in the transference of a larger part of these unavoidable burdens to the less oppressive indirect taxes.” There were to be more customs duties, but as taxation was to be spread over a wider area, its weight was to be felt less rather than more by the individual. It was his intention “not only to impose higher duties upon isolated articles which are specially suited thereto, but to return to the principle of taxing all objects imported over the frontiers, as recognized by the Prussian customs legislation of 1818, and applied by the general entrance duties of the Customs Union tariff until 1865.” The only exceptions were to be raw materials indispensable for industry. The idea of giving special protection to particular industries was expressly disowned. It was contemplated at that time that the duties to be imposed should average 5 per cent., and that on this basis an additional revenue of three and a half million pounds would be raised without any appreciable increase in the costs of collection.

The publication of this memorial at Christmas let loose the floods of political controversy. If the Protectionists in Parliament, who had for years regarded with dismay the growing abandonment of their principles by Delbrück, were jubilant, the Free Traders were plunged into blank despair. They had long seemed to be fighting a winning battle, and the very slowness of the Government’s acceptance of their views had made them confident that once the conversion was complete it would be permanent. Now, in the very moment of

apparent triumph, the fruits of all their patience and toil were to be snatched from their hands.

Public opinion in the country was divided on the whole according to interest, imaginary or real. Perhaps the only class of the community which was altogether won over to a policy of Protection were the agrarians, comprising at that time not only the large proprietors but the small owners and cultivators, for the fall in agricultural prices had injured all equally. Of the industrial classes those warmly favoured Protection who suffered from foreign competition, but those to whom cheap raw materials from abroad were essential objected in the same degree. The trading classes, the shipping interest, and the banking interest were in general hostile, at least to the threatened corn duties, and the salaried and wage-earning classes wished for no change. The attitude of the mercantile population was reflected by the vigorous opposition offered by the seaport towns, particularly the free ports of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck, and by a joint protest issued by a congress of fifty of the most important Chambers of Commerce.

Early in 1879 the Tariff Commission reported in favour of the introduction of a large number of new duties falling equally upon agricultural and industrial products, including corn and its derivatives, live stock, meat, timber, coal, textile goods and yarns, glass, iron and steel goods, and copper. The duty on wheat and oats was to be 10s. a ton, and on rye, barley, and maize 5s. a ton. The discussion of the customs tariff so revised occupied almost the whole of the session of the Diet, which opened on February 12th.

“I regard it as my duty,” said the Emperor in his opening speech from the throne, “so to work that the German market shall be reserved for our national production, so far as may be consonant with our general interests, and that our customs legislation shall accordingly return to the proved principles on which the Customs Union prospered for nearly half a century, and which have to a large extent been abandoned by our commercial policy since 1865. I cannot admit that real success has attended the change.”

This uncompromising declaration of war upon Liberalism in fiscal policy was accepted by the Opposition as a clear indication that, supported by a Diet so reactionary in composition, the Government would not stop at half-measures. Bismarck himself took charge of the Tariff Bill and piloted it through the Diet with unwearied energy,

consummate tact, and unfailing resource. In the speeches made during the debates on the first reading in May, he said:

"The first motive which impels me to enter upon such a reform is the Empire's need of financial independence. This need was recognized when the imperial constitution was drawn up. The constitution presumes that the system of matricular contributions should be a temporary one, and should only last until imperial taxes were introduced. . . . Certainly it is undesirable that the Empire should be a burdensome boarder or a dunning creditor, while it might be a liberal contributor to the individual States if only proper use were made of the revenues which the constitution put in the Empire's way, yet which hitherto have been disregarded.

"A second reason why a change of the present system seems necessary lies in the question, Does the burden which must necessarily be imposed in the interest of the State and the Empire take the form in which it can most easily be borne, or does it not? This question must, according to my conviction, be answered in the negative. . . . The Federal Governments are convinced that indirect taxes, a source of revenue so long neglected by the Customs Union, are the form in which the burden that we may have to bear will fall most lightly."

Turning to the question of protection for industry, he continued:

"It is a reproach to our existing legislation . . . that the incidence of our indirect taxes does not afford to our national labour and production the measure of protection which can be given to it without danger to the interests of the community. No one can expect Germany to remain permanently the dupe of an honest conviction. Hitherto the wide-opened gates of our imports have made us the dumping-place of all the overproduction of foreign countries. . . . Let us close the doors and erect the somewhat higher barriers which are proposed, and see that we at any rate preserve the German market for German industry."

The bill left committee almost in the form proposed by the Government, whose difficulty was less to incite its followers to enthusiasm than to keep the duties within moderate limits. The agrarians did their best to increase the corn duties, but their only success was in persuading the Government to tax rye, like wheat, at 10s. instead of 5s. a ton. It was these duties which roused the strongest hostility, since they affected all classes equally, and their effect was most clearly understood. The deputy Lasker, in one of the

passionate speeches with which he intervened in the debates, predicted a formal feud between town and country as a result of the new policy, which he described as one of preference for the propertied against the unpropertied classes, and as such a conspiracy against social peace.

In his eagerness to get to work upon the task which now absorbed him, Bismarck had not been deterred by the reflection that of the two parties upon which he would in the main have to depend one had not long ago deserted him at a critical moment in circumstances which pointed to personal even more than to political motives, while with the other he had been engaged in a long struggle marked on both sides by extreme bitterness and rancour. Now he had no compunction in throwing over the faithful allies who had been the shield and buttress of his majority since 1867. The National Liberals, unwilling to be identified with the parties of indiscriminate opposition, strove to the last to find some reasonable basis of accommodation. They were not all uncompromising free traders, like their near neighbours of the Left, and they were genuinely sympathetic towards fiscal reform. Hence they were willing to accept the purely "financial" duties, as the duties on petroleum, wine, coffee, and tea were called, as well as an increased tobacco duty, provided the Government would give guarantees against any weakening of the constitutional rights of the Diet in relation to the control of the budget. On the other hand, they held reservations on the subject of the protective duties, and were loath to give any binding undertaking regarding them. The demand for guarantees was the more reasonable since it was expected that with the operation of the revised tariff the needs of the Empire would be more than met without resort to matricular contributions, leaving the Government in command of a steadily increasing revenue. As, however, taxation once approved could only be altered by law, it followed that the Government would be placed in a position of dangerous independence, unless means were devised whereby certain of the new taxes would remain under the direct control of the Diet. To this problem Bennigsen, the National Liberal leader, applied himself, in the hope that by solving it he would simultaneously succeed in retaining for his party continued influence upon Ministerial policy.

The Clericals, on the other hand, were prepared to vote the protective duties without any reservation whatever, but in return for

their support of the financial duties they demanded concessions in the domain of ecclesiastical legislation. Suddenly there had opened to this party prospects of influence and power which had never before been within its reach. The Ultramontanes had hitherto been pariah to the dominant castes, whether Conservative or Liberal; now fortune seemed to have thrown in their way the chance of playing a leading part in national politics. Happily for the party, it was still under the direction of one of the shrewdest of political leaders, a man of rare resource and of infinite patience, a man also who never made a tactical mistake. Windthorst saw his chances, and turned them to excellent use. His policy lay in outbidding the National Liberals in this competition for the privilege of official recognition, and he waited his time, knowing that he had more to offer than his rival; for to the National Liberals complete acceptance of the Government's programme was impossible, while the Centre, a party created for confessional purposes, was bound by no economic and hardly by any political ties. When, therefore, Bismarck asked the National Liberal party with Mephistopheles, "What hast thou, poor devil, to give?" the answer was apologetic and unsatisfying; without ceasing to count as a Liberal force, the party was able to concede little that was of value to a Government that wanted so much.

Before the die was cast Bismarck again offered Bennigsen a seat in the Cabinet, wishful to make sure of his co-operation and influence. The offer was declined, yet, still unwilling to see his party disowned and isolated, and also sincerely apprehensive of the fruits of a Conservative-Ultramontane coalition, Bennigsen suggested a new compromise. It was that, given guarantees for the maintenance of the Diet's effective control of the budget, his party should accept the financial duties as they stood, but that decision on the protective duties should be left to the free discretion of the House, on the clear understanding that in the final division the National Liberals would vote for the tariff in the form given to it by the Diet, an arrangement which, while it might not in the event give the Government all it wanted, would at least assure its scheme against total wreck.

Whatever chances of success this offer might have had if endorsed by a united party, the hopes built upon it were rudely dispelled by disagreement amongst the National Liberals themselves. The left wing of the party, led by Lasker, refused to accept any compromise upon

the general principle of Free Trade. As Bennigsen was thus unable to carry his party with him on the major question, his proposed compromise on the minor one of constitutional guarantees did not ease the situation. His suggestion was that the Diet should fix each year the revenue to be derived (by the Empire from the important taxes on salt and coffee, and that any excess should be divided amongst the States according to population, unless disposed of otherwise by special law. Of the other duties the Government would receive the complete proceeds. It was expected that this arrangement, by placing a largely increased revenue at the disposal of the Treasury, would have made matricular contributions unnecessary. Windthorst's colleague, Baron von Franckenstein, proposed an analogous guarantee, except that he was prepared to vote all the taxes once for all, while assigning to the Empire only the same revenue as hitherto from the customs and tobacco duties, the excess to be in future divided amongst the States. In other words, the matricular contributions would in this case still continue, but only for accounting purposes; they would be levied *pro formâ* in order to meet deficits which would be more or less fictitious, and the States would then receive back from the Imperial exchequer payments which would fall below or exceed these contributions according to circumstances.

Bismarck heartily disliked the Franckenstein proposal as still perpetuating the matricular contributions, and greatly preferred that of Bennigsen. At the eleventh hour, indeed, before the fate of the bill and the composition of the future Ministerial coalition had been decided beyond revocation, he tried once more to come to an arrangement with his old allies. The National Liberal party by this time, however, was hopelessly split, and the Free Trade section in particular was hostile to any form of compromise. Lasker, the fiery spirit of revolt, had gathered around him a following of resolute adherents, resolved to defend the party's Liberalism against its Nationalism at all hazards, and Bennigsen was now only able to count on the support of seventy members, a number quite insufficient to create with the two Conservative groups a majority of the House.

Working to a time limit, since the longer the choice between the two rival parties was deferred, the greater was the danger that he might lose the support of both, Bismarck now saw himself compelled to abandon the coalition which had served him so well for twelve

years. The Conservatives and the Protectionist National Liberals together would have numbered at the outside 186, in an assembly of 397, while the Conservatives and the Ultramontanes controlled 210 votes, a number which would give him a majority and something to spare. Of the alternatives a coalition of the Conservatives and semi-Conservatives was the more natural, and in the event it might have succeeded in attracting many of the waverers who in German parliamentary life hang upon the fringe of the larger parties, but in such a crisis Bismarck was not disposed to take risks. Looking to the future also he had to weigh the fact that while he might have to pay heavily for the support of the Conservative-Clerical combination, these two groups were the most homogeneous and best disciplined in the Diet, the groups freest from internal frictions, and therefore most likely to offer him a support upon which he would be able to count at all times, so long as he was himself willing to continue the compact and pay the price.

He therefore decided to accept the " Franckenstein clause," as it was called, and hence the Conservative-Clerical alliance which its acceptance implied. This clause was in the end modified in one particular. Instead of the condition that all revenue from the customs and tobacco duties beyond the amount hitherto received (108 million marks) should be divided between the States, as had been originally proposed, it was agreed that such a division should apply only to the excess beyond the sum of 130 million marks. The Franckenstein clause was approved by the Diet on July 9th by 211 votes to 122, the majority being composed of the full strength of the Conservative and Clerical groups, while the National Liberals emphasized their resentment by voting solidly with the Opposition.

It was the last display of unity made by the National Liberal party. Divided upon the principal issues of the day, paralysed by internal discords, antipathies, and rivalries, the party now rushed headlong into disaster. A group of fifteen members of the right wing pronounced unreservedly for the Government and accepted the Tariff Bill without reservations, but the majority continued for a time unconvinced. In the following year, after the immediate occasion of the rupture had passed away, those members of the party whose Liberalism was more than a name – among them Lasker, Bamberger, Rickert, and Forckenbeck – dissociated themselves from perverts and

opportunists alike by seceding. Declaring that “the National Liberal party is no longer actuated by that unity of political conviction upon which alone its justification and its influence depend,” these members founded a group of their own, called the Liberal Union, which in 1881 entered the Diet twenty-one strong.

The Franckenstein clause was disliked by most of the thoughtful members of the Diet as perpetuating the evils of the matricular system, as a concession to particularism, and a humiliation to the Empire, which besides remaining dependent in finance as before now became a tax-collector for the federal States. Ever fertile in resource, Bismarck sought to justify his capitulation to the Centre by the tardy discovery that the question whether the Empire received its necessary revenues direct, or mediately from the States, was after all immaterial – a mere choice between *bonnet blanc* or *blanc bonnet*. His opponents did not allow him to forget, however, that a desire to abolish the matricular system of contributions altogether, with its arbitrary principle of assessment according to population, had been his principal object in revising the tariff, and that he was now perpetuating it in an even more objectionable form than before.

To his old associates, the National Liberals, Bismarck was far less than just. Their fault in his eyes was that they had dared for once to be independent; that they had shown themselves willing to go a long way in the desire to please him, even at the sacrifice of conviction, weighed as nothing in the scale against the fact that they had refused to sacrifice and stultify themselves entirely. While, therefore, they complained that he too lightly severed the old relationship, he persisted in regarding himself as the victim of base desertion, and his resentment against them was both bitter and permanent. Upon the question of separation itself reproaches were as unreasonable on the one side as the other. The alliance, for Bismarck at least, was one of political convenience, and when the allies were no longer able to see eye to eye it was open to either side to discontinue it. The manner of the separation was on Bismarck’s part abrupt and ungracious, but if the disowned associates could not emulate him in the rancour of his upbraidings, they at least put into feeling all that he put into words. From this time may be dated the decay of the National Liberal party as an influential, and almost as a serious, factor in German parliamentary life.

Bismarck had attained his end; and the revised tariff was now secure, but already it was evident that the honours of the tourney would have to be shared with Windthorst and the Clericals. Although his party was making common cause with a Government which for some years had been relentlessly fighting the Roman Church and the Papacy, Windthorst made it clear that its motives were purely egoistical, and that there had been no bargaining. “What we are doing,” he said, “we are doing for reasons which lie in the situation. We have promised nothing, and no promise has been made to us. I say that because it has been asserted that we shall eventually be duped. If we had made promises it would be objectively possible that we might be duped, but as we have neither given nor received them it is impossible, and, moreover, let me say that the man who intends to dupe me will have to get up early.” Windthorst was resolved already that if any duping was to be done at all it should be done by himself; for the present it was enough to know that as no other Ministerial coalition was practicable, the fate of the Government, for the duration of one Parliament at least, was altogether in his hands.

The division which decided the fate of the Franckenstein clause decided the fate of the bill, which was adopted in the same sitting by a vote of 217 against 117. Seventeen National Liberals voted with the Conservatives and Clericals for Protection, but the great majority of the party voted with the Radicals and the Socialists against it. Before this the new Ministerial coalition had been cemented by a proceeding of unmistakable significance. Forckenbeck, the Liberal President of the Diet, and the first Vice-president having resigned their offices, the new allies promptly divided the vacant positions.

Part of the new tariff was to come into operation at once, part on October 1, 1879, and the remainder on January 1, 1880. Grateful for the success of a cherished scheme, the Emperor wrote a warm letter of congratulation to his victorious Chancellor (July 20th), in which he said: “You undertook to stir up a wasps’ nest, and I sided with you from conviction, though I feared the result of your enterprise. It is rare that such a complete change of opinion has been achieved in so short a time.”

The new tariff was now law, and in order that there might be no doubt that it was intended to be strictly enforced, Bismarck added to his offices of Imperial Chancellor and Foreign Minister that of Minister

of Commerce in the Prussian Government. He was convinced that covert opposition and unwillingness to accept new departures were obstructing the transition to Protection. Accordingly he insisted upon some forcible removals in that somewhat hide-bound department, and for the rest appealed to the loyalty of his subordinates. Calling the higher officers together, he gave them to understand in his most affable manner that Free Trade was dead and buried, and that Germany's fiscal system had passed under the sovereignty of other ideas. Let them be loyal to the new order, and all would be well.

One of the first direct results of the change of policy was a strong attempt to force the Hanseatic Free Cities into the Imperial Customs Union. Possibly the attempt might have succeeded at once had it been made in a different way. A year had not passed before the Chancellor addressed to the Federal Council (April 19, 1880) a memorial on the subject in which he complained that both Hamburg and Bremen "persist still in keeping outside the customs territory," and that they seemed to regard their position as free ports "no longer as a temporary one, as it was intended to be according to the treaty of July 8, 1867, and the intentions of the constitution, but as permanent." As regards Hamburg, therefore, he proposed on Prussia's behalf that the twin-seaport of Altona, situated in that kingdom, and the St. Pauli harbour quarter of Hamburg, adjacent to it, should cease to be outside the customs territory. A week later Hamburg replied with a counter-memorial declaring simply that any such interference with the treaty rights of the State without its consent was unpermissible, and inviting the Council to come to a decision upon this major question of law before discussing the Prussian proposal. The Federal Council had no intention to override the rights of one of the smaller States at Prussia's request, yet for reasons of policy it sought to evade the constitutional issue. The Diet, however, emphatically declared itself on the side of Hamburg and against the overbearing Chancellor in a declaration to which politicians now so alienated as Windthorst (Clerical), Lasker (National Liberal), and Richter (Radical) subscribed.

Bismarck, who never suffered opposition or accepted defeat tamely, promptly answered Hamburg's challenge by cancelling all the special facilities which the Prussian railways had hitherto afforded the port in connection with its live stock traffic. He had also in reserve another rod wherewith to punish the refractory State, should it be

needful. This was a new Elbe navigation treaty with Austria, which had been concluded in March, 1880, and now awaited ratification by the Diet. One of the articles of this treaty provided that all goods, whether they entered Germany from the sea or from Bohemia, should become liable to customs duty on crossing the customs boundary on the Elbe just in the same way as in crossing the customs boundary on land." As the fixing of the customs boundary on the Elbe was left to the Federal Council, it rested with that body, in which Prussia had so large an influence, to make the line either favourable or unfavourable for Hamburg. The Diet detected the possibilities of reprisals herein offered, however, and while unable to alter the wording of the treaty, approved it subject to the proviso that no new customs line should be fixed except in virtue of a special law. It was Delbrück who unkindly put this spoke in the Ministerial wheel.

The opposition of the Federal Council was overcome by Bismarck's proposal of a compromise to the effect that for the present only Altona and the Elbe from that town and Harburg (both in Prussia) to Cuxhaven should be incorporated in the Customs Union, leaving Hamburg in possession of all its treaty rights, but in splendid isolation. The proposal was warmly resented by the Free City, and led to another storm in the Diet. Feeling became doubly embittered when the Radical deputy Dr. Virchow read a letter in which the Chancellor candidly admitted that the removal of the customs boundary to Cuxhaven would compel Hamburg to seek admission into the union on pain of seeing the Elbe estuary converted into a Free Trade *mare clausum*, with neither ingress nor egress. There was, indeed, no disguise whatever as to Bismarck's intentions. He wanted to complete the economic unity of the Empire, and a Free Trade enclave in a Protectionist country was to him an intolerable incongruity.

The Diet was prorogued at the end of the year, and before it met again the financial provisions necessary to the proposed change had been prepared. In the meantime public opinion had come round to the view that the interests of the Empire were larger than those of its principal seaport, and that in clinging too tenaciously to its ancient rights Hamburg was placing itself in an unwise and untenable position. In the end a violent and impolitic controversy was settled by peaceful negotiation. In March it became known that the Senate of Hamburg and the Chancellor were in negotiation, and soon afterwards

the Free City saw the wisdom of capitulation, convinced by reflection that it had been fighting for rights and privileges which, if lawful, were no longer expedient. By friendly agreement it was stipulated that with the exception of a small area, which should permanently remain a free harbour, unless Hamburg itself agreed to the contrary, the whole of the territory of the City State should from October 1, 1888, become part of the Imperial Customs territory. The law on the subject (February 16, 1882) stipulated that the Empire should contribute to the extent of two million pounds to the costs of the buildings, docks, equipment, and other arrangements necessary in the interests of traffic, as well as the expropriation proceedings incidental to the change. The costs to Hamburg itself were estimated at five million pounds. The incorporation of Bremen was not equally urgent, and it was only effected by a law of March 31, 1885. The cost to the Empire in this case was £600,000.

A further measure adopted at this time in pursuance of Bismarck's policy of protection for national trade recalled the early English Navigation Laws. A bill passed in 1881 provided that the German coasting trade might only be carried in German bottoms. Exceptions to the rule were to be allowed only in virtue of reciprocal international agreements. Upon the subject of navigation privileges in general Bismarck held strong opinions. When in November, 1879, Prussian ships navigating the Russian reaches of the Niemen, hitherto a free river, were required to pay dues, he promptly telegraphed from Varzin instructions that no Russian ships should be allowed to navigate the Prussian length of the river at all, dues or no dues, a counter-stroke which had the desired effect.

The operation of the new tariff was the signal for a strong wave of Protectionism which, first sweeping over the Continent, passed thence to the United States and the British Colonies. Russia, Austria, and France all increased their duties in 1881 and 1882, and it was not long before customs barriers rose on all hands to a height hitherto unknown. England alone retained her old faith in the policy of a free market. From the industrial standpoint Germany's first experiences of the new tariff were not in general encouraging, for the protection of one industry proved to the prejudice of another. Those who had known clearly what they wanted and had succeeded in obtaining it were well satisfied, but for a time discontent and disillusionment were

common. The extent to which corn-growing benefited in the early years is uncertain; but there is general agreement that the small cultivators gained little or nothing, for the fall in corn prices which succeeded was not for a long time followed by a proportionate fall in rents, and this relief, when it came, proved to be of brief duration.

In 1884 Bismarck claimed that Protection had "freed the country from economic pressure," and that its prosperity was steadily increasing; imports and exports were both advancing, and there was in every port more shipping. Even yet, however, that drooping flower of the national garden, agriculture, had not lifted up its head. In 1885 the price of wheat was lower than for thirty years, and. that of rye was far below the average. Before Protection was introduced there were far-seeing politicians who suspected that although agriculture was brought last into the scheme of fiscal reform it would end by taking the first place. Baron von Schorlemer-Alst predicted in 1876 that he "heard already the iron tread of the agrarians, with Bismarck as tambour-major at the head." Now the cry of need was again raised by this depressed industry; alike in the Imperial and State Legislatures there was urgent appeal to the all-powerful State to complete the good work of rescue which it began five years before. The Government did not hesitate to respond to the call. Early in 1885 a bill was introduced revising the tariff on both sides. The *exposé des motifs* which accompanied it claimed that by the law of 1879 the country's "economic development has been diverted from a false course into one which will enable energetic and discerning effort to compete successfully with other countries both in the home and foreign markets." It was held, however, that "a natural development and improvement" of the tariff was necessary to the better attainment of the goal desired. Bismarck once more stepped into the arena and championed the cause of Protection against its critics, boldly claiming that, in spite of the necessity for severer duties, the existing tariff had worked well according to its limitations.

The law as passed in May increased the corn duties all round – those on wheat and rye threefold, from 10s. to 30s. a ton – and also raised the duties on other farm produce and a few industrial articles. There was little serious opposition, and the Ministerial majority was composed as before of Conservatives, Clericals, and National Liberals. This second measure of Protection was passed in the special interest of

agriculture, yet the new duties proved no more successful than the old in arresting the fall of prices, which continued during the following two years, and reached their lowest point in Ger many in 1887. In that year the agricultural party once more reminded the Government of its obligations, and there was a further increase of the corn and live stock duties. In February there had been elected a Diet in which the Conservatives and National Liberals held a majority, and Bismarck, yielding to agrarian pressure, endeavoured to increase the duty upon wheat and rye from 30s. to 60s. per ton. The National Liberals, a hundred strong, held the balance, however, and their resistance led to a compromise, though the rate fixed, 50s., was then equalled in no other European country.

During the years which saw the reversal of Germany's Free Trade policy Bismarck carried out another project, of great importance for the interests of commerce. This was the unification and nationalization of the railways of Prussia, a measure resorted to in default of a larger scheme, by which the entire railway system of Germany was to have been taken over by the Empire and worked as an imperial enterprise. The idea was not a new one. The constitution drawn up by the "Professors' Parliament" of Frankfort in 1848 proposed to give to the Empire then contemplated control over all existing railways and the right to construct and work new lines on its own account. A little later Bismarck himself, as a deputy in the first Prussian Diet, had advocated the closer connection of the State and the railways, with a view to the ultimate adoption of a large scheme of nationalization. It was in pursuance of this aim that he introduced in the constitution of the new Empire provisions giving to the Imperial Government power to build railways and also a large measure of control over the railway system generally.

In proposing the nationalization of the railways Bismarck did not ignore the consideration of revenue, yet the desire to reduce to order the existing chaos in railway administration and to develop the railways for the national advantage was the governing motive of his action. An incidental object which he had in view was the abolition of the illicit system of import premiums in vogue at that time. These premiums were offered in the form of preferential railway tariffs, under which corn from abroad was conveyed from the coast at low rates, to the benefit of the consumers, but to the great injury of the

home producers.

Ever since 1871 the Prussian State had been competing more and more with private capital in railway enterprise. While some of the States applied to the reduction of their public debts so much of their share of the French indemnity as remained after other indispensable expenditure in the common interest had been covered, Prussia wisely allowed her moderate debt to remain, and invested the available money in railways and other productive undertakings. Several small railways were also bought by the State at the end of the bubble company period, when owing to exhausted resources their proprietors were unable to complete or work them, yet still for a long time private enterprise greatly predominated.

An impetus was given to the nationalization movement by the irregularities in connection with the promotion of Prussian railway companies which were unearthed by Dr. Lasker in 1873. These were debated in the Diet, with the result that the Government appointed a committee to investigate the whole question of railway construction, ownership, and administration. The result of this committee's report was the establishment in January, 1874, of a State Railway Council, one of whose duties was to exercise a continuous survey of the national railway system with a view to the construction of lines according to a considered plan. The Imperial Diet had already, by a law passed in 1873, created an Imperial Railway Board which was intended to act as a supervisory authority and as a court of complaints both for the Empire and the individual States. The Board entered upon its career amid high hopes, but from the first it had to encounter stubborn opposition on the part of the railway administrations, both State and private, with the result that its practical value proved small.

Faced by the refusal of the railway administrations of the various States to co-operate in introducing some degree of uniformity in the management of their lines, Bismarck tried in 1876 to win the Federal Council for a scheme under which all the important railways in the Empire would have become part of an imperial enterprise. As the head of the Government it was not difficult to persuade the Prussian Diet to lead the way by offering to hand over the whole of the State railways to the Empire on condition that the other States agreed to do the same. Many Radical deputies, jealous for the fetish of individualism, joined with the representatives of the private railway companies in

opposing the bill on the subject, but there was a large majority in its favour. Prussia's willingness to be the *corpus vile* upon which this large experiment in railway nationalization was to be tried proved futile, however, for all the other States refused to fall in with the scheme. In part, their opposition was due to a natural desire to benefit still further by profitable undertakings which experience had shown to be a useful source of indirect taxation, but other reasons were the old jealousy of Prussian aggression and a fear that any new concessions made to the Empire would lead to yet further demands. Bismarck thereupon abandoned the idea of imperial railways, and it was never revived.

Nevertheless, failure to bring the States into line only strengthened the Prussian Government in its resolve not to rest until the entire railway system of the northern kingdom was either owned or administered by the State. Company after company was therefore bought out, particularly after 1879; where new lines were necessary the State constructed them; and within a few years the great majority of the railways, and all the important trunk lines, had passed into State ownership. The administration of the railways was also thoroughly reformed, and while greater consideration than before was given to the interests of commerce and agriculture, the lines were made to an increasing degree a source of revenue. While Prussia thus benefited, the effect of her vigorous railway policy was felt throughout the whole Empire, since it compelled the backward States to bring their own railway systems and administrations into a condition of greater efficiency. In the event the example and initiative of the major State brought about the very reforms which its allies had refused to accept under direct pressure.

SOCIAL ADJUSTMENTS, 1871-1888

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THE FOREMOST EPISODES IN the domestic history of Germany during the period of Bismarck's Chancellorship having been related in detail, other notable events and tendencies incidental to the new epoch may be reviewed more summarily. The dominant mark of this epoch was expansion, in the form of greater political influence abroad and in the development of the nation's material resources at home. The war of 1870-1871 had not been attended in Germany by any of the violent economic and social disturbances which had convulsed France.

No German territory was invaded, no systematic blockade of the German coasts was attempted, and the temporary dislocation of labour, large though it was, caused no serious set-back to industry. The conclusion of a victorious peace was the signal for a great outburst of activity throughout the entire country, and the nation was carried forward on a wave of patriotic enthusiasm into new spheres of material enterprise and conquest. The foundations of German industrial and commercial prosperity had been laid long before; now the fabric itself sprang suddenly into sight, beneath the busy hands of her myriad builders.

Seldom has a nation so rapidly bridged the gulf between a position of relative poverty and one of positive well-being. For the first half of the century Germany still ranked as an impoverished country. Wages everywhere were low, being seldom much above and often below the subsistence level; local dearth was frequent; in many of the districts dependent upon home industries "hunger typhus" periodically decimated the population; the rising manufacturers of the factory towns had hardly begun to talk of fortunes; the successful business man was the man who had just enough, and he was usually well satisfied with that. Germans then lived frugally because they could not do otherwise. Until after the middle of the century about a quarter of all the wheat produced in the country was sold abroad, and the coarser rye was kept at home for food. Yet even by this time the nation had given pledges of an assured economic future. Compulsory education had given to the artisan and labouring classes a high level of intelligence and aptitude, while compulsory military service had developed in them in a large degree the spirit of order, discipline, and cooperation. These advantages could not fail to prove of great effect in a material competition which was destined to be one of brains,

science, and organization. There could be no hope of any marked advance, however, so long as the States closed their doors to each other, and the first definite commercial awakening may be dated from the time when the breaking down of internal customs barriers converted all Germany into one market. How important was this unification of the country for economic purposes will be understood. when it is remembered that during the forty years following the middle of the century the population of the German customs territory increased from thirty-two to nearly fifty Millions. The next necessary step was to introduce within the union of States greater uniformity in the media of commercial exchange and a common body of commercial law. Attempts to unify weights, measures, and coinage bad been made since 1833, and they bad partially succeeded; it was not until 1868, however, that this measure was carried out thoroughly for the States forming the North German Confederation; three years later it was applied to the Empire as it exists to-day. The metric system of weights and measures, first introduced optionally, became compulsory in 1872.

New forms of commercial enterprise, and especially the public company system, enlisted the resources of the community in the service of trade and industry upon a scale unknown and impossible hitherto. It is commonly supposed that Germany's first era of company promotion dated from the 'seventies, when the distribution of the French milliards gave an artificial impetus to enterprise and speculation. It really began twenty years before, in the flotation of large banks and other financial institutions, but it soon spread in other directions; in addition to railways, both State and private, many of the large mining, smelting, iron and steel, machinery, sugar manufacturing, steam shipping, and textile companies were established in the middle of the century. In those days were laid the foundations of many industrial undertakings which have since ranked with the most famous in the world, and of many princely for tunes which later enabled their owners to exchange the rank of commoner for that of the minor nobility. It was at this time also that the banks began to cultivate the relationship to industrial enterprise which became so intimate in later years. The idea of the co-operation of bank and industry had in 1852 given rise in France to the *Crédit Mobilier,* and German financiers were not slow to turn the idea to use. The

German Bank for Trade and Industry was established in the following year at Darmstadt, and other banking institutions followed on the same lines. Only in the 'seventies did company promotion become for a time a mania; yet while it then led to many unhealthy developments, a large balance of solid advantage remained. Enterprise became more daring; many large new industries were established, and not a few old towns were recreated on industrial lines.

Now also Germany began to take a prominent place in foreign markets. The value of her foreign trade increased from 2,100 million marks in 1850 to 3,200, millions in 1860, 4,240 millions in 1870, and 5,980 millions in 1880. Later the progress was equally marked, and the increase in value during the following decade was to 7,470 millions. The export trade in particular received a powerful stimulus owing to the colonial movement which took practical shape in 1884 and 1885, with the concurrent introduction of mail steamship subsidies, by the aid of which regular communication by German vessels was established with East Asia, Australia, and parts of Africa. The years from 1880 onward were, as has been shown, a period of active emigration, and no fewer than 1,362,000 persons of German birth were lost to the Empire from this cause during the ten years 1880-1889, alone. But the loss of population brought gain in other ways; if the emigrants did not make new Germanies over the seas, they made markets and consumers for German goods, and thus more work for the hands left at home.

The economic transition which was diverting the nation's energies in an increasing degree from agricultural into industrial and mercantile channels was illustrated by the growing aggregation of population in the towns. In the middle of the century one in four of the inhabitants of Prussia, one in five in Würtemberg, and one in seven in Bavaria lived in towns. Thirty years later two out of five and at the end of the century one-half of all the inhabitants of Germany belonged to the urban class.

Notwithstanding these changes, so momentous in their influence, the years immediately preceding and following the establishment of the Empire were years of comparative barrenness in legislation for the welfare of the people. The third quarter of the century had passed before either the Government or the nation became conscious of the existence of a social question. As late as 1871 the Tübingen political

economist, Gustav Sebönberg, wrote deploring "how little we in Germany know about the real position of our working classes." It has been shown already that economic individualism had obtained a foothold in Germany. Copied from England, where it had from the first been embraced with passionate devotion by the hard-headed industrial pioneers of the North – *dura virum mater* – this austere faith had all the harshness and crudeness of copies, and it was under its unfavourable influence that the first great development of industrialism and the factory system took place. With the introduction of the constitutional era a strong revulsion against restraints of all kinds set in, and in sheer relief the middle-class parties welcomed liberty in any form and degree, little concerned about its effects.

When at the inaugural meeting of the Association for Social Policy, formed at Eisenach in 1872 to counteract the State policy of *laissez faire,* Gustav Schmoller claimed that the just desires and demands of the working classes should be emphasized with "moral pathos," the phrase was turned to a jest by the individualistic school of politicians, who replied that economic science had nothing to do with either morality or pathos. Nevertheless, from the Eisenach movement went forth beneficial influences which powerfully reacted upon the later development of the social question. From the first the leaders of the new movement – among whom were many well-known professors of political economy, including Schmoller and Adolf Wagner of Berlin, Conrad of Halle, Lujo Brentano of Munich, Scbönberg of Tübingen, and Wilhelm Roscher of Leipzig – were called "Socialists of the Chair," a label more infelicitous than labels given in reproach usually are, since not one of them was identified, directly or indirectly, with either the party or the programme of Social Democracy. The name clung, however, and it has been used ever since with complete inconsequence to denote those university teachers and writers who, in their criticism of Socialism, have persisted in discriminating between the false doctrines and the true. So strongly entrenched was individualism in the Diets at that time that it was 1874 before factory inspection was introduced in Prussia, at first for Berlin and Silesia, and later for the whole kingdom; Saxony followed suit, but only in 1878 did it become obligatory – at least by statute – throughout the Empire. The most resolute opponents of this innovation were the Radicals, individualists almost to a man, who scoffed at it as a revival of the old

police despotism.

When the question of social reform was taken up in earnest it was on the initiative of a Minister who hitherto had not touched and had barely looked at it. Bismarck had, indeed, already shown in his own crude way that he was not insensible to the sufferings of the poorer classes. Visiting England in 1862 he heard of the success of the co-operative movement, and on his return home he interested the King of Prussia in the movement. When a little later Lassalle came forward with his project of Productive Associations on a co-operative basis he persuaded the King to make a grant from his privy purse towards the cost of forming societies. Owing to his influence also the Silesian handloom weavers in 1865 received from the same source help in starting a co-operative manufactory. All this may have been laudable benevolence, but it was not social reform. Years were to pass before Bismarck realized that social conditions required ameliorative legislation. Busch, strong on the motives and origins of Bismarckian policies, says that he awakened to the recognition of a social question as early as 18711, when exchanging ideas with European Governments regarding the measures best suited to counteract the Internationalist movement. If be awakened, lie did no more at that time, for it was his struggle with Socialism at home, which began seven years later, that really opened his eyes to the fact that all could not be well with the social system under which hundreds of thousands of the most patient people in the world were flocking to the banner inscribed “Proletarians of all countries, unite!”

Was Bismarck ever a social reformer by study and reasoned conviction? It is doing him no injustice to answer this question negatively. Upon this, as upon most questions, he was guided by intuition and instinct. He saw that things were wrong, and without troubling about scientific theories and sanctions, he tried, by heroic measures and straight cuts, to make them right. Yet his solicitude for the working classes was an acquired solicitude, and he arrived at it under the pressure of political difficulties. The whole bent of his mind was against any interference with the “natural” relations of capital and labour. When, as late as 1877, the Prussian Minister of Commerce prepared a bill which was intended to afford to the working classes greater protection in matters affecting their physical and moral welfare, Bismarck criticized it so severely that it had to be dropped.

He regarded the labour question still as essentially one of more or less wages, of longer or shorter hours of employment, and he was far more concerned that employers should not be unduly crippled in their power to meet labour's just demands than that work should be done under ideal conditions. For traces of any genuine comprehension of social problems, or even of intimate knowledge of the working classes, Bismarck's speeches will be searched in vain. They abound in vivid intuitions of economic truth, in true and sagacious reflections upon social relations, and invaluable dicta of common sense and worldly wisdom, which even the best trained sociologist may still read with profit, but they reflect a mind influenced rather by expediency than deep conviction and impelling enthusiasm. He passed social laws because they were necessary; social reform was never to him a passion, but always a policy.

When, however, Bismarck had once decided to enter this untried path, progress was far easier for him than it was for the early reformers in England, where the prejudices and preconceptions to be overcome were so many and so deeply rooted. Individualism seemed to have conquered in Germany, but the truth was that the victory had merely been that of the handful of men who had for the time controlled fiscal and economic policy in the Ministries, and it lasted only so long as they lasted. Never did individualism obtain a firm hold upon national thought. The theory that the State had an unquestionable right to interfere in any direction in which the common good was endangered, and that it was the special duty of the Crown to hold the balance between conflicting interests, had for generations been a ruling tradition of Prussian statecraft. Now, in the conditions incidental to a time of transition, this tradition proved of immense value. It was not necessary to create precedents for State action; precedents existed in abundance, and all that was needed was to go back to the forsaken ways.

The student who compares the different lines followed by social movements, particularly as reflected in labour law reforms, in England and Germany will find an invaluable clue in the fact that these movements have relied for their chief impetus in one country upon self-help and in the other upon State initiative and furtherance. In England the tendency was to set labour free from fetters and then leave it to fight its own battles. Hence freedom to organize in trade

unions was given to the English working classes as early as 1825. In Germany the tendency was the other way. There labour has never yet been free, and such liberty of action as it enjoys to-day was gained in England half a century ago. To Governments still steeped in the traditions of absolutism it seemed safer to admit a tacit obligation to do for labour what it was not able or allowed to do for itself. That labour has so seldom given proof of gratitude for the boons conferred upon it is chiefly due to the fact that the State has never seriously tried to view labour questions from the labour standpoint, and that reforms for its benefit have too often been carried out only under pressure. “While we laud and magnify the great deeds of the Imperial Government in social politics,” writes a German historian of social movements, Dr. F. Naumann, “it must never be forgotten that many of these great deeds were only necessary because of the gigantic blunders of the same Government, and that all the laws for the protection of skilled workmen are a poor substitute for the free activity of the trade unions.”

Inheriting these traditions, Bismarck decided before the Empire was ten years old to embark upon the largest and most original experiment in constructive social reform ever attempted, an experiment which threw into the shade the best that had been done by the heavy-handed but well-meaning patriarchalism of the past. Brushing on one side all questions of wages and hours of labour, as questions which the working classes should be left to settle with their employers, and ignoring all demands for the right of free organization and combination, as opening up a vista of dangerous possibilities at a time when Socialistic doctrines were making ominous headway, he proposed a great scheme of social insurance by which the workers were to be afforded care and provision in all the vicissitudes of industrial life – medical treatment and maintenance in sickness, generous compensation in the event of accident, support during periods of unemployment, and finally pensions in the time of old age and permanent disablement.

The germ of this idea of social providence was to be found in existing institutions, some with a long and honourable past. Ever since the time of Frederick the Great there had been miners’ benefit societies in Prussia, affording help to members and their dependents in times of need, societies so admirable in purpose and organization

that all the modern insurance legislation has left them still free to do their old work in their own way. Since the middle of the century also societies for the relief of sickness had been formed in large number by the working classes on the voluntary principle which had already been successfully developed in England; in many parts of the country the same purpose was served by the workshop clubs, often subsidized by the employers; and in South Germany the municipalities insured the labouring classes against sickness. In spite of all these agencies, however, the number of wage-earners for whom such provision existed was still far smaller than the number of those without it.

One of the first measures passed by the Imperial Diet in 1871 had been an Employers' Liability Law, applying to factories, mines and quarries. Not only was that legislation partial, but liability was contingent on proof of culpability, and even more than the corresponding law of England it proved a fruitful source of litigation, engendering much bitterness. Often the injured workman's only chance of obtaining redress lay in appeal to the law court, where he fought against hopeless odds and under conditions which gave him every inducement to accept a fraction of his rights rather than risk the loss of the whole. On the other hand, the law was onerous and inequitable from the standpoint of small employers, since it made no provision for distributing the risks, with the result that these men often were either unable to meet their liabilities or were crushed beneath the weight of them.

A beginning was therefore made with the improvement of the provision for injured workmen. Instead of tinkering the existing law, as was done later in England with deplorable results, Bismarck decided to legislate afresh upon the two principles of compulsory insurance and mutuality. The first Accident Insurance Bill was laid before the Diet in March, 1881. It was intended to apply only to some of the more dangerous industries and enterprises and to secure almost automatically to the workpeople employed therein pensions for injuries which destroyed or reduced their earning capacity, with pensions to their dependents in the event of fatality. The employers were to pay two-thirds and the workpeople one-third of the premiums, and the State was to make a contribution towards increasing the benefits. Insurance was to be effected through a State institution with a view to eliminating private gain. Bismarck at once resolutely took

the field on behalf of this social crusade, and during the five years occupied in passing the early Insurance Laws he expounded and defended his proposals at every step.

The only parties which took up an unfriendly attitude were the Social Democrats and the Radicals, the former because nothing short of the immediate realization of the collectivist State would satisfy them, the latter because the proposals were in conflict with their cherished individualistic doctrines. The Diet struck out the proposals for a Central Insurance Board and for State subsidies, and Bismarck withdrew the bill for the purpose of reconsidering both it and the Diet, for new elections were due in the autumn. In the hope of rallying the working classes to the support of the bill he now promised that part of the proceeds of a State tobacco monopoly, which he proposed simultaneously, should be applied towards the cost of social reform, thus becoming a "patrimony for the disinherited." So confident was his belief in social reform as a political asset that he appealed to the country mainly upon this question. The issue was, however, complicated by the Protectionist controversy, and the part of the nation which supported him on that question was smaller than that which endorsed his social insurance policy. The result was that the Ministerial parties lost many seats, and that for his new majority Bismarck had to depend upon a coalition of Conservatives and Clericals.

The new Diet was opened on November 17th with a striking Imperial Message on the social question, since regarded as a classical declaration of State policy towards labour, and still spoken of to-day as the German charter of social reform. Emperor William I is commonly credited, if not with the authorship, at least with the inspiration of this memorable document. With neither authorship nor inspiration had he anything whatever to do, for while it is true that it received his cordial endorsement, as well as that of the Crown Prince, with whom Bismarck conferred before its final form was decided, the work itself, both in conception and composition, was his Chancellor's. The Imperial Message was the precursor of a larger scheme of social reform than had been contemplated hitherto; it was in effect a declaration that social reform could never again be regarded as a chapter of national life that could be completed by any specific measures at any specific time, but must rather be thought of as a

running record of amelioration and progress to which each generation and each decade must make its own due contribution.

It was not until June, 1884, that a law on accident insurance was passed. A larger group of trades and industries was embraced; the principle of mutuality was retained; but the entire cost was now placed upon the employers, who voluntarily renounced the offer of a State subsidy rather than submit to the large measure of Government interference which its acceptance would have entailed. The law came into force on October 1, 1885, and during the succeeding three years it was extended so as to include practically all the wage-earning classes.

In the meantime a sickness insurance scheme had been enacted on equally comprehensive lines. Introduced in the Diet in May, 1882, it was submitted to discussion and scrutiny for a whole year before it was deemed fit to leave the Legislature, so that when it became law in May, 1883 (with force as from December 1, 1884), it was a masterly piece of constructive legislation, so thoroughly and honestly wrought in every part that it was able to stand the test of practice for a generation without any alteration of its main principles. The contributions required to meet the cost of benefits were to be paid to the extent of two-thirds by the workers and one-third by the employers; a State subsidy was neither given nor asked for.

Bismarck did not carry measures of such magnitude without encountering a vast amount of prejudice and much vehement hostility. Only two parties in the Diet carried their opposition to extremes – the Radicals on the plea that his reforms went too far, the Social Democrats on the plea that they did not go far enough. When Dr. Bamberger crystallized the objections of the former party in the dogmatic utterance, “To carry on social policy is to commit the State to a series of Socialistic postulates,” Bismarck answered that he was too old to be terrified by phrases; it was enough for him that the policy which underlay his proposals, let these be called by whatever name the Radicals wished, was the traditional policy of Prussia. To the Socialists he replied that what they really feared was that ameliorative legislation might promote social contentment, and that their mills might in consequence have to stand still.

Provision for old age and incapacity remained to be made, and this likewise took the form of insurance. Before a bill on the subject was

introduced, an outline of the intended proposals was submitted to the Prussian Economic Cabinet at the end of 1887, and later was published for general discussion. Criticisms and suggestions were invited from public authorities, associations of employers and workpeople, social workers, and the Press, and only after this inquest of the thought of the nation had been made was a bill submitted in the Diet. Like the other two measures of social insurance, this likewise was compulsory, while the cost was equally divided between the workers and their employers, except that the State undertook to make a contribution to the pensions given. The bill was ultimately passed in May, 1889, though by a small majority – 185 against 165. The Conservatives and National Liberals voted solidly in its favour, but all the Clericals except thirteen, all the Radicals except one, and the whole of the Social Democrats voted against it.

The question of making provision for the unemployed, either in the form of insurance or assistance by work, was allowed to stand over, and meanwhile the municipal authorities were encouraged to regard this province of social providence as specially suited to local effort.

Of all the opposition offered to the social insurance laws that of the Socialists, the representatives of the class to be benefited, was the most incomprehensible. In later years the leaders of the party gave currency to the myth that they were the true friends of this beneficial legislation, and that without them it would not have come into existence. It is undoubtedly true that the Socialist agitation had directed public attention to social evils which had been ignored so long as they were borne by the victims patiently. Bismarck himself admitted that without that agitation social reform might have been indefinitely postponed. If, however, the Socialists entertained friendship for these laws, they showed it in remarkable ways. Most of their criticism was negative and barren, and their only positive action took the form of demands so extreme and impracticable that their effect, if not their purpose, was purely obstructive.

It was unfortunate that repression at this time went hand in hand with attempts to conciliate the working classes by ameliorative legislation, for the effect was to cause the Government's professions of good-will to be received with sullen ingratitude. Hence as soon as social legislation was promised Bebel declared in the Diet (May 4,

1880), “To your positive measures for their benefit the workers reply with ringing laughter,” while the Dresden party congress of 1882 formally decided to “reject State Socialism so long as it is inaugurated by Prince Bismarck and is designed to support the Government system.” The party soon had reason to change its mind, however, for the Copenhagen congress of 1883 decided to accept the proposed reforms for what they were worth. In later years it might truly be said that the blessings showered upon Bismarck’s insurance legislation by the Social Democrats were more emphatic than their earlier curses; yet the fact remains that had the leaders of the party had their way the social insurance laws might not have been passed to the present day.

No sooner had social reform begun in one direction than other labour problems were found to need attention. One related to Sunday labour. No one was more hostile at that time to interference in the relations of capital and labour than Bismarck. A prodigious worker himself, he refused to listen to any proposal to regulate the hours of labour, either of men or women, holding that upon such a question no general rules could be laid down, and that the individual worker should be allowed to fix for himself the limits of his endurance. Only under great pressure was he persuaded to abandon his attitude of non-intervention even in regard to Sunday labour. The Industrial Code of 1869 exempted workpeople from the obligation to work on Sunday except in industries which required uninterrupted operations, but it did not forbid Sunday work, and for many years it was common both in factories and workshops. In the industrial districts of the West there were employers who kept their workpeople at the wheel all the year round except on the high festivals, with the curious result that if prisoners were employed with them, as was often the case, the forced workers rested every seventh day while the free men toiled on. In 1882 Bismarck tardily capitulated in principle upon this question, but it was only in 1886 that he moved seriously in the matter by referring it to a commission of investigation. The report of this commission was a tragic document, particularly as throwing light upon the destruction of home life. The evidence of the employers showed great difference of opinion as to the need for Sunday work, some contending that industry could not exist without it, and others frankly admitting that in most cases it was due to greed of gain. The workpeople were almost

unanimous in demanding at least one free day in the week. Nevertheless, five years more passed before the question was regulated by imperial legislation, as the result of an international labour conference held in Berlin.

Meanwhile, something was done to preserve the existence of the small tradesmen and handicraftsmen by weakening the provisions of the Industrial Code relating to freedom of occupation. That law was, as has been shown, the result of a Liberal awakening, and as such it was obnoxious to the feudal Conservatives and hardly less to the Clericals. Hence one of the first fruits of the coalition of these parties in 1879 was a successful attempt to replace certain trades and occupations under the old restrictions by means of a system of concessions and licences, some granted by the State, others by the local authorities. More important were the efforts made by the same parties to subject the trade guilds to far-going restrictions. After vainly trying in 1879 and 1880 to secure the passing of a rigorous bill on the subject, the Government produced one of its own. The Conservatives clamoured for compulsory guilds.

Declining to go so far, the Government nevertheless gave to the guilds certain powers of pressure and even coercion in relation to handicraftsmen desirous of remaining outside. The law also created Chambers of Handicrafts, on the analogy of the Chambers of Commerce, of Industry, and of Agriculture, for the representation of the collective interests of the guilds of given areas, the exercise of general oversight over these organizations, the regulation of apprenticeship and the examination of masters and journeymen. Like some other hastily devised social legislation of that and a later time, the law relating to trade guilds has since undergone much amendment, chiefly in directions regarded by the Liberal parties as reactionary.

Not the least difficult of domestic problems was that of the government of the border populations which had been united to Germany against their will, and the last of the conquered peoples, the French of the *Reichsland* or Imperial Province, promised to give more trouble than the first, the Poles of the East of Prussia. Lorraine was almost wholly French, while Alsace, notwithstanding a strong survival of German traditions in the rural districts, had become strongly French in sentiment. 0 To the difficulties thus created by race and language

were added others due to religious antagonisms. For except in Lower Alsace the population of both territories was overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, and the alienation which thus existed from the first was deepened by the fact that soon after the annexation Germany entered upon her quarrel with Rome upon a question of dogma and faith. Nevertheless, if success was not achieved in the work of conciliation the causes did not all lay in the antecedent conditions. For a time Alsace-Lorraine was placed under absolute rule, like a vassal territory. Governed from Berlin by the Emperor, which meant the Imperial Chancellor, it was inevitable that the administration of the Province should from the first have fallen into Prussian hands. It was doubtless with the best intentions that the Prussian bureaucracy was specially chosen for the difficult task, and the choice made unquestionably for efficiency. It does not seem to have occurred to the statesmen in power in that day that efficiency might have waited until progress had been made with conciliation.

The obligation of military service had been introduced as soon as the Province passed into the new occupation, for though 47,000 Alsatian women petitioned Bismarck to defer the levying of recruits for several years, he refused to delay a measure which he professed to believe would hasten rather than retard attachment to the new citizenship. Next the French system of local government was superseded except in the towns, where it continued in part for many years. The Province was subdivided into districts and circles on the Prussian principle, and to all three administrative areas were assigned the customary representative assemblies. Local government was decidedly improved, for the officials introduced from the North were able and honest, if narrow. In a short time the laxity incidental to the French system disappeared, and unaccustomed activity reigned under the influence of men who had been taught that the business of governments, whether national or local, was to govern, and that laws were meant to be enforced. The municipal *maires* in particular were harassed in a way un known so long as they were under the light and easy-going supervision of the French prefects, who had valued a good political record more highly than well-managed towns. Many important reforms were introduced; local finance was reorganized and taxation equalized; the economic resources of the Province were developed; the railways were improved and fares reduced; and the

road system was extended. While, however, all these and other benefits were appreciated, they were outweighed, in the minds of the native population, by the fact that they came from hostile hands. Above all, the "dictator paragraph" of the law of December 30, 1871, which empowered the Chief President to proclaim martial law at his discretion was a source of vexation to a proud and sensitive people. This obnoxious emblem of what to the French was an alien Cæsarism lasted until 1902.

The first Chief President was Eduard von Möller, a bureaucrat of the best type, and he went to Strassburg with ardent hopes and generous intentions. In so far as he was free to follow his own wishes he leaned towards leniency, and it was not his fault if the Province showed itself as hostile to moral as to military conquest. Under his direction much was done for the social and intellectual welfare of the population, not without regard for its speedier Germanization. A university was re-established at Strassburg in May, 1872, at the cost of the Empire, and 300,000 volumes were presented to its library from all parts of the country. The value of the institution was admitted, but if the gift was appreciated there was little public sign of gratitude. At its opening Strassburg refused to decorate itself, and the only German flags displayed were those which floated over the cathedral and the public buildings. The first rector of the university, a local professor of theology, was for a time boycotted by his old colleagues as a renegade.

One of the first measures by which it was sought to combat French influence was the restriction of the use of the French language in the schools and in official intercourse. The educational changes in particular caused great friction, and this increased when school attendance was made compulsory. The Germans had found education largely in the hands of the Roman Catholic priests and nuns, and comparatively few of the teachers held diplomas. By the School Law of February 3, 1873, which was passed as a weapon in the struggle with Rome, school inspection was transferred to the State, and henceforth only German teachers, who had capacity, if not always tact, were appointed.

Amongst the most difficult of the problems which had to be faced was that of the future citizenship of the old population of the Province, and here almost inevitably much bad blood was created.

The inhabitants were given until October 1, 1872, to decide whether they would for the future be German or French subjects, and according to the Peace of Frankfort all who "optated" for France were required to leave the country within a specified period, failing which they were to be regarded and treated as German citizens, possessing all rights as such, but liable also to the corresponding duties, including that of military service. So hard were the conditions of choice found to be in practice that of 165,000 "optants" only 50,000 (12,000 being immigrant French people) were able to make their choice effective, by seeking a home and a livelihood across the frontier, and many of those who thus emigrated were compelled later to return and become German citizens against their will.

All these measures, with the rigour of their enforcement and the want of consideration shown by the minor bureaucracy, provoked deep resentment, which made unavailing the Chief President's personal urbanity. The most hopeless fact of all was the astonishment of Berlin that the French did not accept the new rule with joy and gratitude. When the elections to the district and circle diets took place in the summer of 1873 more than half the members returned refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Emperor, and as a consequence few of the diets were allowed to meet. In the same year the Strassburg Town Council was suspended because of a quarrel with the Government, and in April, 1874, it was dissolved, the affairs of the town being administered in commission for some time.

It was originally intended that the constitution of the Empire should be introduced into the Province at the beginning of 1873, and that until then the Emperor and his Chancellor should continue the autocracy, but the time was found to be too short for a transition so fundamental, and the date of the change was postponed for a year. From January, 1874, however, the Province was given direct representation in the Imperial Diet by fifteen deputies, eligible on the same franchise as the rest of the members. The first elections resulted in the return of a compact body of "Protesters," not all equally vehement in their anti-Germanism, but all bound by mandate to declare solemnly against annexation in the Diet of the Empire. Of the deputies two were bishops and five priests, and nearly all were Roman Catholics, so forming a welcome addition to the newly organized Centre party. The first act of the "Protesters" in the Diet was to

propose a resolution declaring that “inasmuch as the population of the Province had been incorporated in the German Empire without being consulted, the Government should at once take a vote upon the question.” The resolution received only twenty-one votes, and on its rejection most of the “Protesters” left the assembly and Berlin, and took no further part in the Diet’s proceedings during the session.

Later the deputies from Alsace-Lorraine divided into two parties; the “Protesters” continued to protest, but there was formed a group of Alsatians who would have been satisfied with autonomy within the Empire. The action of this party at home was directed towards the cultivation of local patriotism, acceptance of the new situation, and the promotion of the moral and material interests of the provinces; in the Diet it worked for the amelioration of the dictatorship, the abolition of restrictions upon civil freedom and the Press, and of the rigour of the School Law, and the defence of the French language. The moderation shown by this party encouraged Bismarck to advance more quickly than he had intended upon the path of devolution. An imperial decree of October 29, 1874, created a Provincial Council of thirty members, co-opted from members of the three district diets, whose function it was to deliberate and advise upon measures and questions relating to the Province – including the yearly budget – not falling within the jurisdiction of the Imperial Diet, prior to legislation thereon. The Council met for the first time in April, 1875, and was opened by the Chief President in a conciliatory speech, in which he expressed the hope that the Government would soon entrust to the Province the entire management of its affairs – a hope destined to be realized only thirty-six years later. The Council was warmly welcomed, and it proved at first so successful that in the following year Bismarck obtained the Imperial Diet’s willing assent to a further concession to autonomy in an arrangement providing that laws for Alsace- Lorraine which had been approved by the Federal Council and assented to by the Provincial Council might be promulgated without any co-operation on the part of the Legislature.

When in the elections of 1877 the autonomists were further strengthened, Bismarck, accepting the fact as a good omen, increased the powers of the Provincial Council, which was now allowed to pass laws and approve the budget, still subject to control from Berlin. A more important step in the direction of autonomy was taken in 1879.

The deputies from Alsace in the Diet had persistently called for an independent Government, free from interferences which were a constant reminder to the population of its subordinate position. Willing to meet them half-way, Bismarck now caused a constitution to be drawn up empowering the Emperor to delegate the sovereignty in the Province to a Governor, to be resident at Strassburg, who should represent the Imperial Chancellor in the internal affairs of the country. The Alsace-Lorraine department of the Imperial Chancellery and the office of Chief President of the Province were to be abolished, and in their place was to be created a formal Ministry, under a Secretary of State, with several departments, each directed by an Under-Secretary of State. The Governor was to be assisted by a Council of State composed of officials (including the members of the Ministry) and a number of notables of the Province chosen by the Emperor. The Provincial Council was to continue, and its membership to be increased to fifty-eight, and the Province was to be represented in the Federal Council by commissaries *ad hoc* when matters concerning them had to be decided, yet without votes. The Diet approved the scheme in July, and it came into operation in October.

It seemed likely for a time that the popular Crown Prince Frederick would be sent to Strassburg as the first Governor or Stadholder, but the proposal broke down. The next best choice was made by the appointment of Field-Marshal von Manteuffel, who retained the office until his death in June, 1885. He made an honest attempt to win the confidence of the population, respecting religious susceptibilities so far as his own influence went, improving the educational system, and making the lot of "optants" easier, even to the extent of allowing many emigrants to return to their native communes. His conciliatory policy displeased the advocates of forcible Germanization, who complained that for a Prussian official he was too friendly to France, and called for stricter measures. Manteuffel himself was disappointed when in the elections of 1881 the autonomists disappeared and the "Protesters" swept the polls with 133,000 out of 166,000 votes. Now Bismarck lost patience. He had hoped to reconcile the Province to the new rule by setting over it clement administrators, and he saw that he had failed. No longer disposed to waste sympathy and good-will upon people who refused to respond, he began in 1881 a new policy, marked by rigorous measures, such as the suppression of anti- German

societies and newspapers, wholesale prosecutions, the expulsion of French citizens and political agitators, and further restrictions upon the use of the French language.

Manteuffel was succeeded in 1885 by Prince Chlodwig von Hohenlohe, whose appointment was made the occasion of a determined effort by the reactionary party in Berlin, led by Herr von Bötticher, Minister of the Interior, to persuade the Emperor and Bismarck to discard the new constitution and return to the autocratic system of administration. The effort failed, but the spirit which prompted it conquered. By way of compromise more power was given to the Governor, and in order further to emphasize the change of system the Under-Secretaries of State were abolished. Severity on one side was answered by resentment on the other. When before the imperial elections of February, 1887, on the Army Bill, Hohenlohe lectured the inhabitants of the Province upon their duty to their own land and the Empire, they replied by again returning a solid body of extremists, all pledged to oppose the Government. The result was more compulsion and more bitterness. Hohenlohe repelled French agitation with a rigorous hand; he freely expelled French agents, weeded out of the public authorities all persons suspected of entertaining sentiments that could be regarded as either actively French or passively anti-German; he dissolved hostile organizations, banished “optants” whom his predecessor had allowed to remain in the country, proscribed the French language, prohibited the use of the French currency, required all French residents in the Province to take out registration papers, and in the hope of making difficult intercourse with France introduced a rigid compulsory passport system which proved a prolific source of aggravation. Strictly speaking, the passport regulations were contrary to the spirit, if not also the letter, of the Treaty of Frankfort under which Alsace-Lorraine was ceded to Germany, for article 11 of that convention stipulated that most-favoured- nation treatment should be given reciprocally by the two countries in relation to “rights of ingress and egress, transit, customs formalities, and the admission and treatment of the subjects of the two nations as well as of their agents.”

In this year there was again talk of the partition of the Province, Alsace going to Bavaria and Baden and the whole of German Lorraine, with its rich iron-ore mines, to Prussia, but Hohenlohe was against it,

and it is not likely that the Diet would have approved it. On the other hand, Bismarck seriously considered the repeal of the Governorship Law of 1879, the transference of the seat of administration from Strassburg back to Berlin, and the conversion of the Province into a Crown colony. A bill was even drawn up with these objects in view, but at the last moment he was induced to change his mind. All the more determined was he, however, that the form of government it had should be made more rigorous for the discontented population. Hohenlohe's memoirs afford many glimpses of the iron hand in action. In August Bismarck hears that an Old German separatist party has been formed in Alsace, led by certain professors and schoolmasters at Strassburg and elsewhere, and he writes to the Governor that if this be the case "it must be the result of an inclination to subordinate State interests to personal feelings," and as "State officials have no right" to personal feelings, he orders them to be "sternly dealt with."

So the struggle between the races passed more and more completely into the vicious circle of provocation and retaliation, and when Hohenlohe laid down his office in 1894, after Alsace-Lorraine had for nearly a quarter of a century been under German rule, they seemed as far apart as at the beginning. Hohenlohe was not seen at his best as a local political administrator. With all his open-mindedness upon political questions in general, he shared the pedantry of the scholar, and was apt to make a fetish of logic and consistency. His unbending attitude towards the French, with whom in France he had been so much in sympathy, showed that in his urbane South German character there was yet a vein of Northern iron. Perhaps he was at the time too much under the influence of Bismarck, whose successor he hoped to be, to have cared to give frank conciliation a further chance. It is certain that he would have been the first to blame in another many of the hard measures which were carried out in the Province with his own approval and authority. The only result achieved was to create everywhere a deeper feeling of discomfort and irritation, and to efface the memories of the milder *régime* which had preceded. When the third Emperor and Empress visited Strassburg and Metz in August, 1889, the welcome they received was German and official; the great mass of the population looked on coldly. Hence it was that Alsace-Lorraine remained at the end of Bismarck's Chancellorship unpacified, sullen, discontented, no diadem in the imperial crown, but a thorn.

While the pacification of Alsace-Lorraine was an imperial concern, Prussia had in two parts of the monarchy her own race difficulties, in each case a similar legacy of conquest. In the case of the Polish provinces the trouble went back a hundred years, to the time when Frederick the Great divided the old Polish kingdom with Austria and Russia. After the reconstitution of Prussia by the Congress of Vienna in 1815, an earnest attempt was made by Frederick William III to establish harmony in that part of his realm. He renewed in effect the promise made to the Poles and broken by Frederick the Great, and repeated in identical terms by Frederick William II after the final partition of Poland in 1795, that he would "confirm all and sundry in their possessions and rights, spiritual and temporal, protect the Roman Catholic faith, allow every man to follow his religion freely and peaceably, and in general so rule the land that the sensible and well-disposed inhabitants may be happy and contented and have no cause to regret the change." For a time it seemed as though the goodwill of the population would really be won. So far did conciliation go that the Poles were allowed to have a Governor of their own, sitting side by side with the Prussian Chief President. The only visible result, however, was a steady decline of Prussian influence in the Polish districts. After the Polish revolution in 1830, though there bad been no active response to it over the German frontier, the Government in Berlin decided that the policy of conciliation had been carried too far for safety, and that it was time to assert again the strong hand of authority.

Now began the exasperating device of colonization or settlement, first associated with the names of Chief President E. H. Flottwell and General von Grolmann, which a generation later was to be elevated into a settled policy of State. If the Poles could not be Germanized, they might at least be supplanted by Germans. Accordingly, efforts were made, by the purchase of estates in Polish ownership, to eject the untractable peasants and labourers from the soil, and to establish in their stead German immigrants from Protestant districts. The more the national spirit was repressed, however, the more it gained in strength and purpose. Coercion and persecution multiplied agitation a hundredfold. Political societies, secret and open, were formed in large numbers both in town and country; if the Germans boycotted the Poles, the Poles reciprocated with interest. During the reign of

Frederick William IV repression was stayed, and altogether a milder *régime* continued until Bismarck came to power.

Bismarck repeatedly said that it was the activity of the priests in support of the Polish nationalist movement in Prussia which first convinced him in 1870 of the danger of capitulating to the claims of the Roman Catholic Church after the declaration of the Dogma of Infallibility, and led him early in the struggle with Rome to abolish the clerical inspectorship of schools. Perhaps his least excusable mistake in his dealings with the Poles was this decision to attack the Polish movement from the ecclesiastical and religious side, since by so doing he stirred up against himself and against Prussia the deepest resentment of a passionate people whose attachment to their faith was closely bound up with the chequered history and tragic memories of their dissolved kingdom. For the priests were the natural leaders of the people, and persecution only served to draw the two more closely together. Meanwhile, the Polish cause had gained the assistance of a compact party of about twenty members both in the Prussian and the Imperial Diet. Besides voicing the wrongs and claims of the Polish population, this party was always ready to swell a hostile demonstration against the Government and to work together with the Centre on questions of controversy between State and Church.

Side by side with repressive measures against the Prussian Poles, there began in 1885 a series of wholesale expulsions from the provinces of West Prussia and Posen of Poles of Russian and Austrian nationality, who had settled in these provinces in large numbers. These expulsions inflicted serious injury upon the victims and the communes in which they had lived, and also created a very unfavourable impression in Russia. In the Imperial Diet the episode led to a strong protest, in which the Poles were supported not only by the representatives of the other alien nationalities, the French of Alsace- Lorraine and the Danes of Schleswig, but by the combined strength of the Clerical, Radical, and Socialist groups. The protest having been addressed to the Federal Council in the form of a memorial (January 16, 1886), that body declined to consider it on the ground that the subject of complaint was one of Prussian internal politics, with which the Empire and its Executive had no concern, an attitude not less convenient than correct, but far from satisfactory to St. Petersburg.

In the meantime the Prussian Government had decided upon a measure of a more practical kind; it was a return to the abandoned colonization policy of Flottwell. The first Colonization Law of 1886 created a Land Commission for the Polish districts, and set aside the sum of five million pounds for use in the purchase of estates in Polish hands and their division into holdings of suitable size for occupation by German families. During the first four years of the operation of the law the Land Commission bought in this way some 110,000 acres of land. The effect of this resuscitated form of pressure was to draw the Poles more closely together and to lead them to pool their resources with a view to a united counter-movement.

Land banks were established for the purpose of buying German estates in turn and parcelling them out amongst the families who had been displaced by the Government's action. So successful was this policy of retaliation that the land bought and settled by Poles soon far exceeded in extent that acquired by the German Land Commission, and the consequent rise in prices necessitated additional Government grants at intervals until the Land Commission's original capital had been increased fivefold. Great and undeserved hardship was done by the indiscriminate supplanting of thousands of Polish citizens, whose misfortune it was that they loved their nation and its great past not wisely but too well, yet the Poles as a whole gained rather than lost by the political pressure to which they were subjected. To this policy of expatriation, more than to any other cause, must be attributed the economic and social awakening of the Germanic branch of the Slavic race. Of the Poles displaced many flocked to the neighbouring towns, but a still larger number migrated to the mining and industrial districts of the West, there to create new enclaves in the midst of communities which hitherto had been solidly German.

In the extreme north-west of the kingdom, where in 1866 Prussia had annexed, together with German Holstein, the partially Danish territory of Schleswig, the same problem of the pacification of an alien people had to be faced. The Holsteiners had soon settled down under the new rule, disappointed that their duchy had not been fated to become part of an independent State under the Augustenburg family, yet not lamenting the break with Denmark, and relieved that the age-long dispute over the question of succession had been closed. The Germans of Schleswig were in general equally favourable to a change

of government which gave them part and lot in a larger kingdom. Not so the Danes of the northern districts of the duchy, who held passionately to the displanted dynasty and the old political ties, and this all the more since by article 5 of the Treaty of Prague Prussia had given a promise that the population of these districts should be allowed to decide by *plébiscite* whether it would choose permanent union with the old or with the new kingdom. The pledge had been given on pressure from Louis Napoleon, and as it had not been redeemed by 1870, in spite of Napoleon's reminder, Bismarck had no intention of redeeming it now that the power of France was broken.

Almost from the beginning the administration of the Danish districts lacked sympathy and insight. After the French war spasmodic attempts at conciliation were made there as in Alsace-Lorraine, but they were only a prelude to a rigorous rule which was neither commended by intelligence nor justified by success. There, too, the Germanization movement took the form of aggravating attacks upon the Danish language, first in 1871 by the abolition of the Danish schools, accompanied by compulsion to attend German schools, then by restrictions upon the use of Danish in public instruction, until for practical purposes the language of a quarter of a million inhabitants was restricted to the home and private intercourse. Inasmuch as the Protestant churches became annexed to the State ecclesiastical system of Prussia, the Danes were likewise deprived of their religious independence until they had established free communities and built new places of worship of their own, conducted by ministers who had refused to take the oath to the new Sovereign. Like the other discontented races of the Empire, the Danes carried their grievances into parliamentary life. The Prussian constitution had been amended in 1867, so as to give to the new province nineteen representatives in the Lower House of the State Diet, and when the Empire was established in 1871 it became entitled to return ten deputies to the Imperial Parliament. In Holstein and the German portions of Schleswig the elections were from the first fought on normal party lines; in the Danish districts, on the other hand, the postponed *plébiscite* for years dominated all other questions, and in election after election a small Danish group was returned to both Diets in Berlin, there to protest against annexation to Prussia and to swell the anti-Ministerial vote.

There were short periods when, under the influence of a more clement administration, it almost seemed that the Danes would settle down and adapt themselves to the new conditions, but always there followed a sway of the pendulum; and with a return to harsher measures the old hopeless deadlock returned. Severity reached a climax under Herr von Köller, "the man with the iron hand," who became Chief President in 1898. He went to the province with the single determination to assert Prussia and Prussia's influence, and he stopped at no measure which seemed helpful to that end. The Danes who protested were expelled, and those who remained were put on their good behaviour. Relating his experience when recalled, he said: "I came here with a burning wish to promote Germanism with all the means at my command. The policy I followed was free from all sentimentality, and was based on the principle that Prussia had the right to be mistress in her own house. It was a policy that was apt to be hard and ruthless where necessary." He failed in his attempt to rule an alien people against its will, and like most despots who have essayed the same task with the same result, he never knew the reason why.

Much of the soreness of later years arose upon the question of "optation" for Danish citizenship. By the Treaty of Vienna the Danish inhabitants of Schleswig had been given six years in which to choose whether they would retain the old citizenship and in consequence cross the northern frontier. Tens of thousands of "optants" emigrated, settling for the most part in the northern kingdom. The great majority of the Danes, however, omitted to make their choice in due time, believing that the promised *plébiscite* would settle the matter automatically. The longer the choice was deferred, however, the more anomalous became their position, and when in 1878 Austria agreed to the annulment of the *plébiscite* pledge a new situation was created. Now the Government insisted that the "optants" who had chosen Danish citizenship must either leave the country or, if they wished to remain in Prussia, be treated as nationals and be prepared to meet the consequent liabilities. A rigid interpretation of the question of "optation" was held to justify the expulsion of large numbers of Danes and people of Danish descent, though themselves Prussian by citizenship and residence, who, owing to Danish sympathies or other reasons, had become obnoxious to the authorities. Only after many

years and long after Bismarck's death was an arrangement concluded with Denmark by which the position of the "optants" and their families resident in Schleswig was regularized and the worst of the legal hardships from which they had suffered were removed.

In North Schleswig, as in the Polish districts, endeavours were made at an early date to Germanize the population by the purchase of Danish estates and the settlement upon them of Prussian families. Like the Poles, however, the Danish subjects of Prussia have refused to be supplanted in this way, and by co-operative efforts, by the creation of credit agencies, and by the cultivation of national sentiment by means of a large network of political, literary, and other societies, they have so far succeeded in maintaining their position.

Army bills and other measures relating to national defence played from the first a prominent part in the proceedings of the Imperial Diet, for the Empire had been created by force and by force it had to be maintained. One dominating aim has been steadily followed by the organizers of the German military system ever since the institution of federal contingents or quotas, as provided for by the constitution of the old Germanic Federation, was superseded by a unified national army. Germany was to have at command a force so large and efficient that she should be able at all times to keep the peace of Europe and, if need be, impose it upon her own terms. Moltke avowed this aim of German statesmanship as early as 1868 in a speech in the North German Diet (June 15th), wherein he said:

"What sensible man would not wish that the enormous expenditure incurred in Europe for military purposes should be directed towards peaceable objects? But international negotiations, such as have often been recommended, will never lead to that result. If this end is to be achieved I see only one possibility, and it is that in the heart of Europe there shall be created a Power which, without itself being one of conquest, shall be so strong that it will be able to forbid its neighbours to enter upon war. Hence I believe that if this beneficent work is ever to be achieved it will proceed from Germany. That, however, will only come when Germany is sufficiently strong, that is, when it is united. In order to attain this result in spite of Europe's disfavour we need a navy as well as an army."

When Sybel, the historian of modern Germany, spoke of these words as "truly prophetic," in that they "drew for the European world

the picture of the future," he did Moltke something less than justice. For the military supremacy desired by him continued to be a foremost object of successive German Governments ever since. The attainment of this ambition, however, entailed constant additions to Germany's fighting forces, first the land and later the sea forces, and a corresponding growth of expenditure which kept the Empire in chronic financial straits, and necessarily committed the other nations of Europe, indisposed to submit to the military predominance of any one Power, to similar prodigal outlay upon armaments.

From 1867 to 1875 the peace strength of the army was fixed at 1 per cent. of the population according to the census of 1867, giving a force of 402,000 men, and the expenditure upon it at £33 15s. per man called up. How the money should be spent was a matter for the Emperor – in practice for the military administration – to decide, for the financial competence of the Diet did not go beyond fixing the amount of the votes. Hitherto both peace strength and expenditure had been approved for definite periods. In 1874 the Government sought to arrive at a permanent understanding with the Diet, asking that both figures should be made permanent until a new law to the contrary should be passed, the total duration of service to remain at twelve years. The question created great controversy, and only a compromise proposed by Herr von Bennigsen, the National Liberal leader, averted a dissolution and an appeal to the nation against legislators who seemed unwilling that the Empire should be allowed to defend with the sword the conquests which the sword had won.

The Conservatives were the only party willing to pass the bill as it stood. The other groups objected to the retention of the peace strength at a figure which in 1871 had been regarded as excessive and intended to meet abnormal conditions, and they still more objected to its permanency. Bismarck was ill and unable to appear in the Diet, and the defence of the bill fell to Moltke and the Minister of War. In an alarmist speech Moltke prepared the nation for the duty of protecting the new Empire by arms for half a century. "Since our successful wars," he said, "we have everywhere won respect but nowhere love. On all sides we are confronted by the suspicion that Germany, having become great, may in future become an inconvenient neighbour." Moltke never spoke in the Diet except on military questions, and as a rule his utterances, which were rather urgent than eloquent, carried

great force. On this occasion, however, he failed to convince; for whatever effect his plea for a larger army may have created was neutralized for the majority by his excessive emphasis of the need for strengthening the arm of the State. “Not the schoolmaster,” he said, to the indignation of the deputies on the Liberal benches, not a few of whom were professors, teachers, and journalists, “but the State has won our battles, the State which has now for sixty years trained the nation to physical efficiency and intellectual vigour, to order and punctuality, fidelity and obedience, patriotism and manliness. You cannot dispense with the army, for it is the nation’s educator.”

This appeal for greater submission to the State was not likely to impress favourably the popular parties, and still less the Clericals, who were then in conflict with it over the question of papal authority, and when the bill was referred to committee the peace strength proposal of 402,000 was rejected almost unanimously, and alternative figures, 385,000 proposed by the Imperialists and 360,000 proposed by the National Liberals, likewise failed to obtain a majority. From his sick-bed Bismarck addressed an impressive appeal to parties to sink political differences in love for the fatherland, ending with the threat that as soon as he was able to take up a pen he should hand in his resignation. “Perhaps some one else will be found,” he added, “who will be able to form a reliable majority in the Diet.” The cry of “Wolf!” was at this time still new to the ears of the nervous nation, and the Chancellor’s threat produced an immediate effect.

A short recess gave the deputies time to reflect and take counsel with their constituents, and before the Diet met again the National Liberal leader had produced a compromise which the Government and the generals were willing to accept. The peace strength was to be as the Government proposed, but it was to be fixed for seven years only, and the army estimates were to be voted yearly. So amended the bill was passed in April by a substantial majority – 224 against 146 – after Moltke had bidden the Diet take to heart the warlike preparations which were being made not only by France but by some of Germany’s other neighbours. From the standpoint both of numbers and finance the military authorities in effect won a notable victory. Hitherto the fixed *per capita* grant had been insufficient, and the yearly levy of recruits had been reduced in order that the total army vote might not be exceeded. Now it was possible to call up the full authorized levy

with a certainty that the needed votes would be forthcoming.

In 1881 the septennate agreement was renewed by the help of the Conservatives and National Liberals and the abstention of the Clericals, and now the peace strength was fixed at 1 per cent. of the population of 1875, giving an increase of 26,000 men. Before the second Septennial Act had expired, however, the Government in 1886 demanded its renewal on the basis of a peace strength equal to 1 per cent. of the population in 1885, giving a total of 468,000 men. This time the Diet refused to renounce financial control for seven years, but offered to bind itself for three. From the obdurate deputies, therefore, Bismarck promptly appealed to the nation. The elections of February, 1887, led to the formation of a "cartel" of parties, consisting of the two Conservative groups and the National Liberals, pledged to the support of the bill. Effectively assisted by the Government and the electioneering machinery at its disposal, as well as by the never-failing cry of "The fatherland in danger!" these parties between them captured sixty- three seats at the expense of the Radicals and the Social Democrats, with the result that they formed alone a substantial majority of the Diet. Not only was the Army Bill passed unaltered, but for three years Bismarck was able to legislate upon other questions with an ease and a freedom to which he had long been a stranger.

The history of the other branch of the defensive service, the navy, since the establishment of the Empire falls into two periods, the first a period of slow growth, during which shipbuilding followed no clearly defined plan and still less formed part of a considered foreign policy, and then a period of feverish activity, during which an endeavour was made to redeem in years the ground lost in generations. The earlier of these periods ended in 1890, when Bismarck retired from the Chancellorship.

Attempts to create a German navy had been made since the middle of the century. Before 1848 Prussia had a few ships of war of small size and capacity, but not an organized navy. The consequence was that in the war over the Danish succession in that year Denmark with its relatively large fleet was able to blockade the entire German coast, while Prussia was powerless to retaliate. In order to minimize the disadvantages from which Germany then suffered, a committee of naval enthusiasts was formed at Hamburg, and by means of voluntary funds it succeeded in forming a flotilla of small vessels. In the same

year the Frankfort National Assembly voted nearly a million pounds to be spent on shipbuilding. The money was to have been contributed in due proportion by the various States of the Empire which had just been created on paper, but only half of it was paid. The Assembly went further, and formed a naval department of the new Imperial Ministry of Commerce; appointed a commission, with Prince Adalbert of Prussia as president, to prepare and carry out a shipbuilding programme suited to the Empire's needs; and in the meantime nominated Karl Bromme, who had seen service in the British and American navies, as the first admiral of the incipient fleet. With the dissolution of the Assembly in the following year naval enthusiasm evaporated, and in 1852 the fleet was dispersed, Prussia buying the two best vessels for £60,000, and the rest being sold by auction for about the same sum.

Prussia continued to make additions to her navy, but spasmodically and without settled plan. During the ten years 1854 to 1864 over three million pounds were expended on shipbuilding, and the work of creating a new naval port on the North Sea, on a site of land bought from Oldenburg, was in progress all this time. Already, too, Prussian naval experts had, with admirable foresight, planned a waterway which should connect the North Sea with the Baltic. The difficulties in the way were political rather than physical, and chiefly the fact that the canal would need to penetrate a territory subject to Danish sovereignty. Bismarck, an adept in discovering after the event motives which did not exist before it, said in later years that it was the recognition that the possession of Schleswig-Holstein was an essential condition of German naval power that determined him to go to war with Denmark in 1864. Whatever may have been his intentions in dragging Austria into that enterprise, directly Prussia had come into joint occupation of the duchies he determined that Kiel harbour should not again pass out of her hands. Demanding of the Diet a grant for naval construction (June, 1865), he invited the deputies to make their sanction dependent upon the condition "No Kiel, no money!" and promised them that the money would be duly claimed. At that time, however, he was faced by an unfriendly Diet. The constitutional conflict was still in progress; the Government was carrying on the business of the country without a duly approved budget; and the popular parties were in a large majority. In these circumstances the

Lower House, which otherwise might have been willing enough to assist in strengthening the navy, was not prepared to place more power in the hands of a usurping Executive, which was every day defying the rights of the Diet and making the constitution of no effect, and it refused the votes asked for.

Nothing further was done until the formation of the North German Confederation after the war of 1866, but in the meantime Prussia's annexation of Schleswig-Holstein made it possible for her to develop her fleet under more favourable conditions. Already its headquarters had been transferred to Kiel from Danzig, at the other end of the Baltic. The creation of the Confederation now gave to the question a larger aspect. In the second war with Denmark, in 1864, Prussia had again suffered severely owing to the inability of her fleet to take the offensive or even to cover her own coasts efficiently. Now it was necessary to create a navy capable of protecting the entire littoral of North Germany, including, in addition to some of Prussia's largest and richest provinces, the Hanseatic Cities, Oldenburg, and Mecklenburg. " Bismarck is very amusing with his baby fleet," wrote Earl Russell to Lord Clarendon at this time (1866). Little did the first naval nation in the world then dream how large were the developments that would spring from small beginnings. In forming the new Confederation, Prussia transferred to it all her ships of war, which now became the nucleus of a federal navy. The funds refused by the Prussian Diet in 1864 and 1865 were granted in 1867 by the North German Diet, one of whose first acts was to vote a yearly expenditure on shipbuilding and other naval works of nearly a million and a quarter pounds a year for ten years. Two years later the naval port of Wilhelmshaven, built at a cost of a million and a half pounds, was completed and opened by the King.

During the war of 1870 the vigilance of the German fleet was confined to the protection of the naval ports and the river mouths, and fortunately for Germany the difficulties which France had to meet on land discouraged her from undertaking any bold adventures by sea. A blockade of the Baltic coast was formally declared, but it was not practically enforced, and on both sides the naval operations in the war were of little account. The great numerical inferiority of the German fleet to that of France was, none the less, a reminder that however strong the victors might have shown themselves on land they were far

from invulnerable on water. In order to remedy this weakness a carefully planned but still modest programme of shipbuilding was laid before the now Imperial Diet in 1873. The purpose of the enlarged fleet was to be limited in the main to coast defence and the patrol of the Baltic; though it was hoped that it would prove strong enough to maintain an open passage for German shipping through the Sound and the Belt, any idea of its playing an active part on the high seas either in peace or war was disclaimed. The programme exceeded that of 1867 in the number of vessels to be built, but fell below it in fighting strength. For the first time provision was made for a flotilla of torpedo boats. Important harbour and coastal fortification works were also part of the scheme, the execution of which was to be spread over ten years.

Other changes were made at this time in sign that Germany intended for the future to take her navy more seriously. The naval administration, such as it was, had hitherto been regarded as a department of the Ministry for War, and Roon, as the head of the army, had incidentally been responsible for the fleet. Now a separate Board of Admiralty was formed, with General von Stosch as its first head. At the beginning of the 'eighties when the programme had been completed, the naval estimates were still below two million pounds a year. The early additions to the imperial navy were made by the help of the French indemnity, but from 1875 forward that source of revenue was exhausted and loans had to be resorted to. Up to this point most of Germany's large war vessels had been built abroad, owing to the inability of her few private yards to undertake contracts of the kind. Now the work was kept at home, though shipbuilding material and machinery had still to be largely imported, particularly from Great Britain.

An event important for the later expansion of the navy was the resignation in 1883 of the first Minister of Marine, von Stosch, and the appointment of General von Caprivi as his successor. Up to this point little national enthusiasm for the navy had been awakened, and for this fact Bismarck's own lukewarmness – for which there was ample justification in the greatness of his other tasks and the necessity for caution in all matters affecting Germany's relations with other Powers – was to a large extent responsible. Already, however, there was a strong and restless naval party in official circles, and the experts had

abandoned the idea of keeping the fleet within coastal waters and building only for home defence. In a memorial which he addressed to the Diet in 1883, Caprivi said: "A navy whose centre of gravity was on the land or off the coast would no longer be worthy of the name. The seas cease more and more to divide nations, and the course of history points to the fact that a State dare not withdraw from the sea if it intends to maintain beyond the immediate future a position in the world." It was also Caprivi who first seriously raised the question of the cession of Heligoland. His recognition of the importance for Germany of the possession of the Elbe island, as a cover for her navy, was shared by Bismarck, with the result that advances were made to the British Government on the subject in 1884.

Nevertheless, Germany still continued to build her navy piecemeal, ship by ship, satisfied if only obsolete vessels were duly replaced and the relative strength of the navies of the second class, in which her own was reckoned, did not change to her disadvantage; there was no suggestion of a navy on large lines, and the idea of naval supremacy would have been repudiated at that time as preposterous. Between 1881 and 1891 the *personnel* of the navy only increased from eleven to sixteen thousand. Midway in this decade, in February, 1886, the Diet adopted a bill for the construction of the Kiel Canal and made the necessary grants.

Throughout the entire period of Bismarck's Chancellorship the Empire had to struggle under an ever-increasing load of expenditure, and ultimately of debt, and legislative proposals, large or small, to amend the system of taxation in the interest of ampler revenue were almost of yearly occurrence. Most of the Government's attempts to escape from financial embarrassment were received with indifference or open hostility by the Diet, whose appreciation of the Empire was greater than its willingness to provide it with adequate resources. The choice lay between the development of the customs and excise duties which had been assigned to the Empire by the constitution and a new system of direct taxation. Bismarck himself was on principle favourable to the former, though quite prepared to accept the latter if the Diet compelled him. The Radicals pressed for the introduction of an imperial income tax as a solution of all difficulties, present and future. Out of consideration for the State Governments and the municipalities, both of which relied largely upon the income tax for

their revenue, Bismarck did not favour this solution, yet after repeated attempts to reform the tobacco and beer duties and to introduce stamp duties had failed he had to threaten in 1877 that an income tax might be his next proposal.

The position became worse when the Empire began to fall into debt. Up to 1875 it had by painful effort paid its way, but then came the need to borrow, though the loans contracted in the early years were inconsiderable as compared with those of later date. Part of the money was used for remunerative undertakings, like the Imperial post and telegraph service, part for shipbuilding, fortifications, and other defensive purposes; but the time came when loans were contracted in order to pay of deficits.

The reform of the fiscal system which took place in 1879 was thought to have cleared the way and given the Empire a new start, as had been intended. Had the Imperial Treasury been allowed to retain the whole of the larger revenue derived from the revised customs and excise duties the relief would have been substantial, but the effect of the Franckenstein proviso, already explained, was to give with one hand and take away with the other. For a time it was possible to dispense with matricular contributions, which was a sentimental gain, but by limiting the Empire's share in the new revenue the Diet had defeated Bismarck's main purpose. An administrative change made at this time was of importance for the easier transaction of financial business. Until 1879 the Chancellor directly controlled the financial like every other branch of the imperial administration. In that year an informal Ministry of Finance with the name Imperial Treasury was created, with a Secretary of State at the head. The new director of finance continued to be subordinate in all matters to the Chancellor, and therein was unlike the Finance Minister of Prussia or that of Saxony, who in finance is independent of the rest of the Cabinet to which he belongs and in consequence is not bound by any resolution of the majority with which he may disagree.

A series of new taxation proposals, which for the most part failed to mature, at least for a time, began to appear in 1880. In that year a bill was introduced to extend the stamp duties. There were already duties on bills and playing-cards. Now it was proposed to charge similar duties on share certificates and bonds, promissory notes, lottery tickets, mortgage deeds, receipts, and other documents relating

to credit transactions or traffic in goods. Only the Conservatives were in favour of the bill, and it failed to secure assent, though it was passed in a modified form in 1881, and four years later the Stock Exchange taxes were increased. Another novel tax proposed at this time was a national defence tax (*Wehrsteuer*), to be payable by or in respect of persons who, though liable to military service were not called up owing to physical incapacity or were put back owing to excess of recruits. Bavaria and Würtemberg already had a tax of the kind, and it existed also in Austria and Switzerland. Nevertheless, the proposal was not received favourably by the Diet, and still less by the country. To most people the idea of commuting the obligation of military service by a money payment seemed a degradation of a duty which had hitherto been regarded as one of the highest of citizenship. It was also feared that such a tax would work inequitably, since there could be no guarantee that a Government when in financial straits would not find ways of proving to the military authorities that men of means were more valuable to the country as taxpayers than as soldiers. Combated from various sides, the proposal of a national defence tax was stillborn. Hardly a speaker had a good word to say for it, and it was rejected by general consent. It was the first and last time that a poll-tax of the kind was proposed in the Diet.

Bismarck was not more successful with proposals to increase the taxation of beer. Here he had to encounter resolute opposition from many sides. There was first the jealousy of the South German States, one of whose most important privileges was now threatened. The constitution reserved to Bavaria, Würtemberg, and Baden the right to tax home-produced beer and brandy according to the principles and on the scale habitual in those States, while at the same time requiring them to pay yearly to the Imperial Treasury a sum equal to the taxation which would fall upon them relatively to population on the basis of the taxation raised at any given time from these sources in North Germany. The same arrangement was continued in Alsace-Lorraine in regard to beer. It was not until 1887 that this privilege was modified, and then only in the case of brandy. As the Southern States raised a large revenue for their own purposes by the taxation of beer, of which the Bavarian, to whom it was a fifth element, drank four times as much as the North German, any suggestion of a larger contribution to the Imperial Treasury from this source was warmly

opposed. The North heartily supported the resistance of the South, since in the North German brewing area beer had immemorially been taxed very lightly, and all parties were united in the determination to defend this valued privilege.

After trying in vain to make both ends meet by the help of small additions of revenue obtained in all sorts of ways, Bismarck at last decided that the time had come for abandoning peddling measures and for making a bold departure from existing principles of taxation. When specifying in 1869 the articles which he regarded as most suited to high taxation he had given prominence to tobacco and brandy. With these articles he now proposed that the State should experiment in the untried capacity of monopolist. He had made known his intentions as early as 1878, when discussing a bill for increasing the tobacco duties. In that year the Government appointed a commission to investigate the general subject of tobacco taxation, including the practicability of a *régie*, following the successful example of Austria, Italy, and especially France, one of whose State tobacco manufactories, at Strassburg, had been carried on as an Imperial undertaking since 1871. At that time the yield of the tobacco tax in Germany was barely 4d. a head of the population as compared with 2s 6d. in Italy, 3s. 8d. in Austria, 4s. 10d. in England, and 5s. 8d. in France. Bismarck could therefore claim ample justification for his resolve that "Tobacco must bleed more than it has hitherto done." The eleven members of the commission included eight State officials and three experts, the latter representing tobacco growers, manufacturers, and traders respectively. By eight votes to three – the three being all Government nominees – the commission reported against the principle of a monopoly, and in consequence the Government had for the present to be satisfied with a higher tax, which was approved in 1879. Though the question was postponed, however, it was not regarded as settled. Refusing to be discouraged, Bismarck next convened his trusty body-guard of economic counsellors, the Prussian Economic Council, and called for its blessing upon the proposal. To his surprise this body likewise failed him. Although of its seventy-five members thirty were nominated by the Government and the rest chosen by it from nominees presented by the Chambers of Commerce and Agriculture, the Economic Council reported almost unanimously against the institution of a monopoly.

Notwithstanding these rebuffs, a monopoly project was foreshadowed in the Imperial Message of November 17, 1881, which laid down the lines of the future scheme of social insurance, and a bill was duly produced. The proposals would have given to the State control over the entire production, manufacture, and sale of tobacco in Germany, and consequently have interfered with the livelihood of over 159,000 tobacco cultivators, 15,000 manufacturers of the commodity, employing 141,000 workpeople, and 7,900 large and 359,000 small retailers. The vastness of the economic disturbance contemplated was illustrated by the fact that compensation to the aggregate amount of eleven and a half million pounds had to be provided for.

The Federal Council was hopelessly divided on the subject; in the country opinion was unfavourable; and the entire tobacco trade was bitterly hostile, growers, manufacturers, and retailers uniting in defence of their threatened interests. Of the parliamentary parties only the Conservatives were in favour of the bill, not because they approved of monopolies, but because they scented alternative forms of taxation likely to be more objectionable. The Government fought well, for the prize at stake, an estimated net revenue of over eight million pounds a year, was worth the effort, but the forces against it were too strong. In the hope of allaying opposition Bismarck proposed to give a social significance to the measure by undertaking that the proceeds of the monopoly beyond the amount of the existing taxation of tobacco should be used in financing his scheme of insurance and so form a "patrimony of the disinherited." As yet, however, neither the nation nor its parliament had been educated to the appreciation of grandiose schemes of social reform, and the offer failed to impress them. So much heat was imported into the parliamentary debates that Bismarck at last began to apologize for his unpopular bill. "No enmity, even if you do reject the monopoly," he said; "you must not be vexed with us for having proposed it, as though we had been guilty of high treason!" When the division took place in June the bill was rejected by 277 against 43, the latter all Conservatives.

In 1885 there was an increase of the import duties on corn, meat, timber, and some other articles, but the larger revenue afforded little relief to an ever-expanding budget. In urgent want of money, Bismarck in the following year tried to win over the Diet to another

State monopoly project. This time he wished to appropriate brandy, and for the same reason as before, the inadequate revenue obtained on the existing principle of taxation from a commodity so well suited to be one of the mainstays of national finance. Again the Radicals, weak in numbers, but strong in convictions and in polemical resource, led the opposition, and this project was likewise rejected. The dissolution of the Diet on the military septennate question in 1887, as recorded above, gave the Government a majority which enabled it to increase the taxation of brandy and sugar and to raise the corn duties, the latter professedly in the interest of agriculture rather than revenue. To the existing duty on raw materials used in the production of alcohol a duty on the manufactured article was added, though in the interest of the large agricultural distilleries this duty was reduced upon a fixed quota of potable brandy, a privilege continued for many years and greatly resented by the popular parties. Simultaneously the autonomy of the Southern States in regard to the taxation of brandy was abolished. The effect of the changes was to give the Government an increased revenue of between three and four million pounds. In the case of sugar likewise the existing excise duty on raw material (sugar beet) was supplemented by a duty on manufactured sugar, and the export premiums were put on a new basis and reduced. Bismarck attempted no new monopoly schemes, however, though his belief in the equity and soundness of the principle remained unchanged to the last.

Owing to these various reforms in taxation, always for the purpose of higher revenue, the Empire enjoyed a short period of comparative financial prosperity after 1888, for while the average net yield of the customs and excise duties during the years 1872 to 1880 was about twelve and a half million pounds a year, that during the succeeding decade was twenty-two millions. Instead of having to call on the States for subsidies, therefore, the Imperial Treasury for some years was able to repay to them, in virtue of the Franckenstein provision, not only the full amount of the matricular contributions but a large sum in excess. During the five years 1888 to 1892 the sum so distributed as an imperial bonus was about twenty million pounds.

Only in political life, notwithstanding all the activity and movement visible in other directions, did Germany during these years stand still. There was much ferment all the time, and periods of

apparent advance alternated with periods of more real reaction, but the practical gains to Liberalism and political progress were unsubstantial. During the earlier years Bismarck relied in the Diet upon the help of the National Liberal party, without which a Ministerial majority would have been impossible. After the war of 1866 the feudalist party in Prussia, holding that the time was ripe for abolishing a Diet which had served the country so ill over the question of army reform, and for returning to the less strenuous political conditions of twenty years before, clamoured for another bold *coup d'état*, but Bismarck refused to be tempted. Logical enough to recognize in the dethronement of crowned heads a violation of the sacred principle of legitimism, the Prussian Conservatives acquiesced only sullenly in the annexation of Hanover, Hesse, and Nassau, but they never forgave Bismarck for having sued the Diet for an indemnity when success in arms had placed not only Austria but the constitutional party at his mercy. Disappointment at what they regarded as an act of weakness and as unfaithfulness to principles which they had believed to be his own as well as theirs, created between them a coldness which drove him into the arms of the National Liberals and their allies. To the alliance thus formed was due the fact that the legislation of the North German Diet and of the Diet of the Empire in its early years followed lines which for Germany seemed progressive. Using their opportunities, the Liberal parties tried persistently, both in the Imperial and the Prussian Diet, to extend the principle of parliamentary control, but with no success.

A useful measure of devolution, known as the Substitute Law, was passed in 1878, with the object of relieving Bismarck of such work as did not need the dexterity of the master hand. This law empowered the Chancellor to appoint a deputy for his office or any part of it, and its result was the creation of Secretaries of State, for the direction of various branches of imperial administration, subject still to the Chancellor, who was entitled to resume at any time the delegated functions. In the interest of unity of policy the more important of these offices have since been filled by the Ministers holding the corresponding portfolios in the Prussian Cabinet. The Liberals demanded that the Imperial Chancellor, the only Minister known to the constitution, should be replaced by a collective Ministry, in which he should be only one member amongst many, and subject, like the

rest, to the bidding of the legislative assembly, which meant in reality of the party or parties which might happen to form a majority. Bismarck had only overcome strong opposition to the bill in the Federal Council by giving the assurance that it was not intended to pave the way for an Imperial Cabinet and should not have that result. In the Diet he refused point-blank to consider such a degradation of his position, and referring his critics to the constitution, told them that though constitutional questions were for him questions of expediency, he was quite prepared to respect the *status quo* if the advocates of parliamentary government would agree to do the same.

Nevertheless, when the two attempts made upon the life of the Emperor in 1878 led to the election of a reactionary Diet, he did not fail to legislate accordingly. To that year and the years immediately following fell the law against Socialism, the return to Protection, a series of subtle attacks upon the constitutional right of free occupation, and severer restrictions of the right of assembly, combination, and free speech. In 1881 a general outcry arose over the Government's proposal that the duration of the legislative period should be increased from three to five years and the budgets be biennial. The urgency of such a change was not apparent, and few people believed that the reasons which influenced Bismarck in seeking it were those which he avowed, viz. to secure a more constant co-operation of the Diet in legislation and to prevent undue clashing between the sittings of the Imperial and State Diets. What was clearer and more certain was that the change would make the Government still more independent of parliamentary control than hitherto, and that if the budget needed approval only once in two years the Diet would hardly be wanted oftener. Although the Diet had done Bismarck's bidding so far, it rejected this proposal almost unanimously.

Already he was paying the penalty of the rupture of the alliance with the National Liberals, who had served him so well and so long. The Clericals had offered him their help in a critical emergency, and having become necessary to the continuance of a Ministerial majority, they were showing an increasing disposition to make an arbitrary use of their power. To Bismarck the new alliance had been attractive because the Clericals were organized and disciplined as no other part in the Diet. Before long he began to find their strength and cohesion

inconvenient and their independence menacing to his position. In May, 1880, he bitterly reproached his uncertain allies with not doing their duty with sufficient ardour, forgetting that they had given no pledges, and then with curious disregard of his own responsibility for the break-up of the old Ministerial majority called upon the rest of the House and the Liberals in particular to join hands against the Centre as a common enemy. “If you cannot do that,” he said, in an appeal to the National Liberals in which he emphasized the work still to be accomplished before German unity was firmly established, “then my prospects are dark; if you are able to do it, I will devote my last strength to the task.” An appeal which only a short time before would have evoked enthusiastic response from the entire body of Bennigsen’s followers now failed to move them. The rupture caused in their ranks first by the protectionist policy and then by Bismarck’s ungrateful repudiation of them as a party directly they no longer served his purpose had left wounds which could not be healed by flattering words. The National Liberals suspected that Bismarck simply wanted to use them again as pawns in a party game, and they had no longer any liking for such a rôle.

At the beginning of the ‘eighties Bismarck, still at the zenith of his power, became increasingly despotic in home affairs. In 1881 he made his relative by marriage, Herr von Puttkamer, Minister of the Interior, and as part of the duties of his position Puttkamer had taken over the direction of the Press and the manipulation of the elections. That meant a large interference with the independence of civil servants. He virtually cancelled the civil rights of the bureaucracy, by requiring officials to abdicate all claim to act as free citizens, calling upon them, as an act of duty, to support the Government upon all occasions, and instructing them in elections to vote and work for the candidates who bore the official *cachet*. Criticized in the Diet for a gross violation both of the spirit and letter of the constitution, he calmly replied that he “expected the officials in whose hands the political representation of the Executive rested, in so far as they exercised their rights as citizens at all, to support the Government,” and he aggravated his offence by publicly thanking those officials who had conspicuously helped the Government in the last elections, and assuring them that they might count upon the Emperor’s gratitude as well. Dignified protests from moderate men of the standing of Bennigsen had no effect upon the

reactionary Minister, who knew better than his critics how far he dared to go. When flagrant attacks upon electoral rights published by the semi-official *Provinzial-Korrespondenz*, which Puttkamer inspired and directed, were condemned in the Diet, the journal's editor was promptly decorated with a royal order in sign of approval both of master and man. Scores of elections in inconvenient constituencies were by Puttkamer's instructions manipulated in the interest of the Government, unwilling officials being terrorized into the commission of illegal practices and the voters wantonly obstructed in the exercise of their rights. When a Chief President of one of the provinces ventured to disapprove of such proceedings he was removed from office. In short, under Puttkamer the tone of political life was degraded as never before or since, and his name was used to connote illicit political influence.

Bismarck discreetly kept away from the Diet while his relative was undergoing castigation at the hands of the politicians who had the courage to condemn venality in high places. That he approved of Puttkamer's acts was shown, however, by the publication on January 4, 1882, of a decree declaring it to be the will of the Emperor-King that "both in Prussia and in the legislative bodies of the Empire there shall be no doubt as to my constitutional right, and that of my successors, to direct the policy of the Government personally. It is the duty of my Ministers to safeguard my constitutional rights against doubts and obscurity, and I expect the same thing from all officials who have taken the oath to me. It is far removed from my intention to interfere with the freedom of elections, but for those officials who are entrusted with the execution of my Governmental Acts, and therefore can be removed from their offices under the disciplinary laws, the duty imposed upon them by their oath includes the representation of my policy even in the elections."

The decree was a challenge to which the popular parties were not slow to respond. There were vehement debates in the Prussian Lower House, and the Radicals talked as though a new constitutional conflict was imminent. Bismarck did not improve matters when he declared the degree "was not intended to create a new law," for the implication that it simply reassured an old doctrine – that State officials possessed no right of personal opinion and never had possessed it – suggested to the constitutionalists that for over thirty years they had been living in

a fools' paradise. Later he modified his words and tried to prove that the decree was really harmless. Officials, he said, had a perfect right to vote for whom they liked, even for Radicals, if they had no better taste; all that he meant was that they must to the best of their power combat misrepresentations of the Government's policy and aims. No one believed that this was the meaning of the King's decree or was his interpretation of it, but the National Liberals professed to be satisfied.

Liberalism had at that time to wage a severe uphill fight, and the struggle was all the more difficult because the two wings of the party refused to act together. Not so the Ministerial parties, now the Conservatives and the Clericals, the latter so largely augmented on critical occasions by Poles, Guelphs, and Alsatians that in the Prussian Lower House they formed in effect one-third of all the deputies. In anticipation of the Prussian elections Bennigsen in June, 1882, made a resolute attempt to unite all the Liberal forces both in the monarchy and the Empire in the hope of stemming the powerful reactionary currents which had been running since 1879. The attempt created much enthusiasm in the National Liberal ranks, but it was wrecked owing to the irreconcilable attitude of the Radicals, and particularly of their leader, Eugen Richter, who refused to listen to any suggestions of compromise, obstinately, yet honestly, believing that the true secret of political progress was in the exclusive custody of his little party. The immediate consequence of the rejection of Bennigsen's prudent counsels was that in the elections in the autumn the three Liberal groups lost heavily. Ten years before they had numbered 250 in a house of 432; that number had now fallen to 103.

Discouraged by his ill-success, despairing of the future, and judging that his work was done, Bennigsen, alike to the surprise and dismay of his friends and the regret of his political opponents, retired from the Imperial Diet and the Prussian Lower House in the summer of the following year, and returned only four years later to an arena in which he had laboured for nearly two decades with clean hands and high aims and accomplished for Germany and German unity a work of inestimable value. Forsaken now by the only conspicuous statesman they ever had as a leader, the National Liberals lost confidence, not for the first or the last time, in themselves and their principles, and became more and more a nondescript party, representing neither good Liberalism nor good Conservatism. The Liberal Union formed of a

body of seceders in 1881 lived only until March, 1884, when it was merged, together with the Progressist groups, in the composite Radical (*Freisinnige* or “Free-minded") party then formed – a Cave of Adullam in which a host of democrats of all shades at that time sought refuge until the reaction was overpast. The right wing, made up for the most part of Liberals of wavering faith, who ever since the Protectionist controversy had been longing for the time when they might with decency return to the Ministerial fold, reorganized itself under Miquel and Marquardsen, and at a conference held at Heidelberg in the same month of 1884 appealed to the country on a revised programme. Accepting Protection as a closed issue, the party resolved to sink all jealousies and differences and use its influence equally against reactionary tendencies, as represented by feudal Conservatism and Clericalism, and extreme Radicalism, as represented by Social Democracy. When in May the reorganization was confirmed at a national congress held in Berlin, Bennigsen was there to wish his old associates good-speed, but for the present he refused to be drawn again into the ranks of active combatants. In the elections to the Imperial Diet in October the effect of purging the party of its more advanced members was seen. The Government removed the ban from which National Liberalism had suffered, and it was admitted to a share of the spoils of war in the form of a few seats. The lion’s share fell, however, to the Conservative and Social Democratic groups, which gained heavily at the expense of the Radicals.

The Government’s hopeless alienation from Liberal sentiment was illustrated by an incident which created painful comment both in Germany and the United States in 1884. On the death in America of Dr. Eduard Lasker, for a generation one of the foremost of German parliamentarians, the House of Deputies recorded its regret in a resolution which described Lasker as a “distinguished German statesman whose firm and consistent exposition of free and Liberal ideas, and whose devoted zeal for the same, have greatly promoted the social, political, and economic condition of his nation.” The resolution, of which every word was true, was duly conveyed to the German ambassador in Washington, for communication to the Imperial Diet, but inasmuch as the implied compliment to Liberalism was contrary to Bismarck’s mind, he refused to allow the message to be formally delivered. Eleven years later the Diet, then more Liberal in

constitution, avenged itself by refusing to vote, at the Government's invitation, a message of congratulation to Bismarck, then living in retirement, on the attainment of his eightieth birthday.

In 1884 a further minor inroad was made upon the privileges of the Diet. Up to November of that year free railway passes had been issued to members during the session, allowing them to travel anywhere in Germany. Now the Government decided that free tickets should be issued only for journeys to and from their several constituencies and Berlin. That meant that members who lived in the capital or elsewhere than in their constituencies would be crippled in their electioneering campaigns. The Clericals and Radicals answered with a joint proposal for the payment of members, and it was carried by a large majority, after Bismarck had assured the House that the Federal Council would refuse to act upon it. In 1881, in order to emphasize his attitude, he instituted a prosecution against certain Progressist deputies for receiving maintenance allowances from their party's funds, though he had given an assurance when the constitution was under discussion that private assistance of the kind was not intended to come under prohibition. The Supreme Court declared the party contributions to be illegal and forfeit to the State. Four years later he came back to the question of quinquennial elections. Encouraged by the election in February, 1887, of a tractable Diet, he renewed the proposal which had been rejected in 1881, and a law amending the constitution accordingly was passed on March 19th. A little later the same change was introduced in Prussia.

In sum, it may be said that all the changes made during Bismarck's Chancellorship modifying the relations of the Executive to either of the Diets with which he was concerned were in a reactionary direction. Thus every attempt of the popular parties to secure a redistribution of seats, in view of the great disparities in representation which had been caused by the concentration of population in the towns and the industrial districts, failed in consequence of the opposition of the Government and the parties interested in the perpetuation of the existing anomalies. The political life and institutions, and almost it might be said the political thought, of Germany remained in 1890 just where they were twenty years before.

FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1871-1887 - FRANCE

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"THE EVENTS OF 1866 and 1870," writes Count Beust, who played a prominent part in some of the transformations of that period, "may be compared to volcanic eruptions. Where the fragments fall they lie, and it would be folly to wish to replace them in their former positions." The Franco-German War in particular left the Great Powers of the Continent in new relations. These relations were not all created by the war, for some had been formed, or were forming, before the Peace of Frankfort, or even the decisive day of July, 1870, upon which Louis Napoleon made the gambler's throw that cost France and his dynasty so dearly. The Crimean War had seemed to shatter whatever had remained of the Holy Alliance, yet the three Eastern monarchies were now allies again in all but name. Prussia and Austria had already agreed to bury the hatchet, and the prospect of their reconciliation was for Russia a strong inducement to hold out to Austria likewise a friendly hand.

The attitude of the Powers towards France, on the other hand, seemed for the time to have changed for the worse. When the war broke out France had been cold-shouldered by all Europe as a mischievous disturber of the peace, and even now the sympathy which had been aroused by her misfortunes was tempered by a feeling that she was suffering only the results of her own folly. The countries from which France might have expected the greatest sympathy were those which gave her the least. Her relation to Austria, for a time so confidential, had become that of a negative diplomatic friendship. Austria had forgotten Napoleon's timely services in 1866, and for France Austria's halting response to the pressing advances made to her in 1869 and 1870 was a galling memory, difficult to efface. France seemed also to have entirely parted company from Italy. The new kingdom was not indifferent to the services rendered by the fallen Empire to the cause of its unity, but of real gratitude the Italian nation retained only so much as was due for a patronage which had never been quite disinterested. What had been done by French arms at Magenta and Solferino, and by French diplomacy at Villafranca and again at Nikolsburg, might, indeed, have been done for the glory of Italy, but it was not done without a thought of the greater glory of Louis Napoleon. Even in the Emperor's devotion to his first love amongst the nations whom he sought to befriend the *pensée humanitaire* was not allowed to obscure the *pensée politique*. It was not

forgotten that France had endeavoured to the last to keep Italy out of the holy place of nationalist aspirations, and that she was still in league with the Papacy.

It was clear that France's only hope of regaining the respect and confidence which had been forfeited lay in the pursuance of a policy which should prove to the world that though the crime of setting Europe aflame had been committed in her name it had not been committed on her responsibility. Thiers, in his presidential message to the first meeting of the National Assembly in December, 1871, proclaimed once again that the mission of France in the world was the sacred one of peace. "Our policy is that of peace," he said, "as far from despondency as defiance, proceeding from the conviction that a reorganized France will always be necessary for Europe, and that only such a France will be in a position to fulfil her duties to the other States as well as to herself. France wishes for peace; she declares this on her honour, and will not deviate from this her solemnly avowed word."

It was not only on the part of France, however, that discreet statesmanship was called for at that time, when old ties were broken and new ties had still to be formed. For Germany the need was even more urgent. From the moment of his return from Versailles Bismarck's one absorbing thought had been, How could the political forces of Europe be so organized and used as to ensure the permanency of the status created by three wars? His sole wish now was to consolidate Germany's strength and develop her resources in tranquillity. Could that boon be granted to her, he would have been willing that the new Empire should fall into the background of European politics. Yet while he wanted peace, he was too clear-sighted not to recognize that he had created conditions which made peace uncertain. He therefore feared the future more than he had ever feared in the past, for since so much had been gained there was now so much the more to lose. Already the dread of isolation and the greater dread of a war on two fronts, the West and the East, which were to be the pursuing spectres of his later years, had cast a sombre shadow over his spirit. Germany's success had made one half of Europe restless and the other half jealous. It became, therefore, his interest, as it was his hope, to prove that all suspicions of her intentions were groundless, and that he, the war-maker, had now no

greater ambition than to be regarded as the preserver of peace.

The idea, commonly attributed to Bismarck at that time and later, that he was bent on adding the German districts of Austria to the Empire and mediatizing the remaining smaller German States – which could only have meant incorporating them in Prussia – may be dismissed as mere legend, and not very credible legend. Far from hankering for the partition of Austria, he was too sagacious a statesman to have wished to multiply the difficulties of the Empire and its Government, to give to the Southern States an increase of strength, and to modify the balance of confessional power in Germany, by bringing in a large Roman Catholic population, and that at a time when he was contending with Rome over the eternal question of the provinces of State and Church. As for absorbing the smaller German States, it may be said frankly that he never loved them, yet at no time would he have risked the ruin of his handiwork by aggressive action against them; in later years he even contrasted their willing acceptance of the Empire with the persistent and stiff-necked particularism of his own Prussia.

Bismarck's object was peace, peace almost at any price, but he knew that this object could only be attained in proportion as Germany herself was made secure, and to this end it was necessary not merely to strengthen her armaments, but to win for her friends and to neutralize the influence of possible enemies. For many years Germany's foreign relations and policy were entirely determined by and subordinated to this single aim. In surveying this chapter of the Empire's early history it will be convenient to follow events rather in political than strictly chronological sequence, dealing first with Germany's relations with France, and in a later chapter with her relations with the Powers which were specially interested in the Oriental question.

But first Bismarck sought to draw closer the ties between Germany and her Eastern neighbour. Ever since their alliance at the beginning of the century the reigning houses of Prussia and Russia had continued in more or less close friendship, and this friendship had repeatedly translated itself into timely political action on both sides. Russia on the whole had unquestionably had the best of the bargain. Though her attitude towards Prussia in 1866 and towards Germany in 1870 had been specially cordial and helpful, on neither occasion were her

motives altogether disinterested or the speculations behind them realized. In both wars Russia counted on a more determined and prolonged struggle and a less definite issue than actually occurred, and it was part of her calculations that sooner or later she might be called in to make peace between torn and exhausted combatants unable to agree without her aid. Now that France had disappointed Russia's expectations, just as Austria had done before, there was the greater reason for continuing on good terms with a Power which had proved its strength so unmistakably upon the battlefield. It was Bismarck's belief that Russia had not foreseen clearly that when the war with France was over she would "have so strong and consolidated a Germany as her neighbour."

It was to Russia, then, that Bismarck now looked, in the name of traditional dynastic attachments, for a relationship that should henceforth be something more than that of neighbourly good-will. With Gortchakoff, the Russian Chancellor, who had directed Russian foreign policy since 1856, he had been on terms of close intimacy ever since they were envoys together at the Diet of Frankfort and there laid down informally the basis of future co-operation. As ambassador to the Russian Court from 1859 to 1862 he had succeeded in strengthening the tie of friendship and interest between the two States, and when he returned to Berlin, his mission completed, it was with the assurance that he brought with him "better traditions in regard to Russia." One of his first acts as Prussian Minister-President had been the conclusion of the convention of 1863 for the quelling of Polish revolutionary movements. Later, both in 1866 and 1870, he had been careful to make sure of benevolent neutrality on the Eastern frontier before seeking the arbitrament of arms. It was a due and grateful recognition of Russia's moral support in the late war that prompted the new German Emperor, as his first public act after the signing of the Preliminaries of Peace at Versailles on February 27, 1871, to thank the Czar for having done his part to restrict the area of conflict and to keep a fair ring for the combatants.

Even before this, however, Bismarck had been busily providing for the future. In September, 1870, when the issues of the struggle were still undecided, he had sounded not only Russia but Italy as to their willingness to enter into closer relations with Germany. The fear of any slackening in Russia's attachment was the one bitter drop in the

cup of Bismarck's happiness when he returned home from Versailles in 1871, bringing as his trophies the French milliards, Alsace and Lorraine, and the new Empire. Great was his relief, therefore, and great the jubilation in Germany, when in June he was able to bring the two Emperors together in Berlin in friendly intercourse. In the following December a Prussian military delegation, headed by Prince Frederick Charles, the Emperor's nephew, with whom were Moltke and other generals, was entertained at the imperial festival of St. George in St. Petersburg, when high orders and cordial compliments were exchanged.

Russia at that time would have been better pleased if Germany had been contented with a dual friendship, but in his political attachments Bismarck was always polygamic. Ever since 1866 he had been endeavouring to bring Austria more definitely within the orbit of Germany's influence. Count Beust had resisted invitations and pressure as openly and as long as he dared. Whether or not it was Russia's restraining hand or Emperor Francis Joseph's unsentimental common sense that kept Austria entirely outside the complications of 1870, the defeat of France had nevertheless made it clear to that monarch that for Austria the past was now a completed chapter, and that the future required a new policy, new measures, and above all new men. In December, 1870, telegrams had been exchanged between Bismarck and Beust through the ambassadors of their respective countries, in which the one had defined with due circumspection the new status in Germany and the other had accepted it with apparent good grace. But these purely decorous courtesies had not visibly advanced matters. More definite progress was made in the following August, when, after the visit of the Czar to Berlin, the German and Austrian Emperors met at Salzburg, where just four years before Louis Napoleon and Empress Eugénie had been received with effusive cordiality by the Imperial family.

Bismarck was seeking health at Gastein. There Beust met him, and before he left the two Emperors once more exchanged assurances of friendship in the same place. It was significant that Francis Joseph was attended not only by his Chancellor, but by the Ministers-President of both halves of the Austrian- Hungarian empire, an arrangement which enabled Bismarck to come to closer quarters with Count Andrassy, already marked out as the statesman who was to lead

Austria to her new day. Three months later Beust was invited to resign, and he accepted the inevitable (November 8th), unwillingly, but perhaps not too soon for his reputation. Later he became ambassador in London and afterwards in Paris, where his career ended. Andrassy was installed in the vacant office, and his first act was to address to the Austrian diplomatic representatives abroad a circular note announcing that the Emperor's policy would be "a policy of peace, decided, open, and unshakable." The change of Chancellors was an open confession by one of the shrewdest and most calculating of modern rulers that Austria could not hope to thrive on the meagre fare of hatred and resentment with which since 1866 Beust had been stinting it, and that a total change of diet was necessary. Beust's disappearance now made the way clear for the formal conciliation which both nations needed and for which both were ready.

With mere declarations of platonic friendship, however, Bismarck was not satisfied. He aimed at a practical working agreement – not necessarily a formal and documented alliance – under which the three empires, united by monarchical traditions and by a common antagonism to violent political changes, should serve as a breakwater against democratic tendencies and as a stay of European peace. He won the first signal victory of his foreign policy as Chancellor when the three Emperors met in Berlin from September 5 to 11, 1872, and their accompanying Chancellors were able to confer at leisure upon the basis of future co-operation in European affairs. Cautious and unwilling to commit himself to indefinite liabilities, William I wrote to his Minister at that time: "I shall agree to nothing binding." Nevertheless, before the imperial visitors left it was possible to announce that as a result of the meetings an understanding had been reached upon outstanding questions and upon the general aims towards which the foreign policy of the three Powers would in future be directed, though no formal agreement had been set down in writing. Above all, it was declared that the friendly deliberations of the three rulers might be accepted as a powerful proclamation in favour of peace.

The agreement thus arrived at is commonly known as the alliance of the three Emperors – the *Drei-Kaiser-Bund*. It was not, however, a Bund or alliance in the true meaning of the word, but rather an informal bond of amity; even if it be permissible to call it a union, it

was only a union of good-will. Strictly speaking, it was no more than a friendly *rapport*, expressed in a mutual and verbal understanding that the Powers concerned should work together in matters of common interest as helpful associates. Gortchakoff rejoiced that as a result of these meetings nothing had been reduced to paper.

For a time the so-called alliance secured to Europe the tranquillity which it needed and so much desired. Viewing it in the light of later events, however, it is easy to see how its purposes came to be regarded differently by its members. Germany had proposed it with her eyes specially turned upon France; on the other hand, neither Russia nor Austria had aught to fear from France, while they did not altogether trust each other. Nevertheless, of all the speculations built upon the so-called alliance of the three Emperors those of Bismarck, its author, were destined to be the least fulfilled. He thought that he had now isolated France, and by isolating had permanently weakened her. On the contrary, in Russia he had admitted into the partnership a Power which had no interest whatever in seeing France doomed either to impotence or isolation. In the course of the two following years the Emperor William, accompanied by his Chancellor, paid return visits to St. Petersburg (May, 1873) and Vienna (October, 1874), and Europe then knew that the triple *entente* was complete.

But here Bismarck's schemes were not exhausted. The attitude of Italy towards the new concert of Powers remained to be defined. A closer relationship to her had been his aim ever since the Bohemian war. He wrote to Count Usedom in 1868: " Germany is the natural ally of Italy, since both States are surrounded by neighbours which wish to augment themselves at their cost. . . . Supremacy in the Mediterranean must be the constant thought of Italy and the aim of all her Ministers and their leading principle." Cavour had gone further, and said that an alliance between Prussia and Italy was "written in the book of history." Already Bismarck had, on behalf of the North German Government, given to that country a pledge of friendship by taking a financial interest in the construction of the St. Gothard Railway, a project which appealed to him and to Germany owing to the fact that it would establish communication with the peninsula without touching either French or Austrian soil. In asking the Diet in 1870 to agree to a contribution of ten million francs (£400,- 000) towards the cost of the scheme he frankly admitted that political as well as

commercial considerations weighed with him, adding: “It is a matter of paramount interest to us to possess a means of direct communication with Italy, a country friendly to us, and, as we believe, likely to remain so” (May 26th). The French Government was interpellated on the subject, but after taking time for reflection the Foreign Secretary, the Due de Gramont, replied (June 20th) that it was not a matter that called for interference by France.

On the outbreak of the succeeding war Napoleon had tried in vain to win Victor Emmanuel as an ally. Garibaldi had, indeed, led a small band of volunteers against Prussia, with results somewhat inglorious. That expedition, however, was generally regarded in Germany as the chimerical enterprise of an ardent and impetuous patriot, to whom much was to be allowed and much forgiven, and for it no direct responsibility attached to the Italian Government. Bismarck was of opinion that the official protests against Garibaldi’s enterprise might have been more vigorous, but victory had effaced any resentment which the incident caused at the time. Convinced that Italy would not choose to stand alone, and that unless she were brought into the new coalition she would end by falling again into the arms of France, concerned also to give to the monarchical principle in the peninsula the moral support of the three Empires, for the good of all, he lost no further time in approaching her. His advances found ready response. Since 1870 Italy had become increasingly conscious of the importance of either making peace with the Vatican or finding friends who were not leagued with it. But peace with the Pope was possible only on the Pope’s terms, which implied the restoration to the Church of sovereignty in Rome, and France was ineligible either as ally or friend so long as her Governments were under Clerical influence. In the circumstances the friendship of Germany was not to be lightly rejected.

Here, again, the first advance took the form of complimentary visits. In February, 1872, Prince Frederick Charles, fresh from his successful mission to St. Petersburg, was despatched on a similar visit to Victor Emmanuel in Rome. In May of the same year the Italian Crown Prince (Humbert) and Princess were received as the Emperor’s guests in Berlin, and in September, 1873, Victor Emmanuel visited both that capital and Vienna, accompanied by his Minister-President, Minghetti, and his Foreign Minister, Visconti-Venosta. It is said that

the first words addressed to Emperor William by his guest when the two were alone were, “I must confess to your Majesty that I was just on the point of taking up arms against you in 1870,” and that the Emperor met the frank confession with the affable rejoinder, “But I knew it.” Cordial as had been the reception given to his son in Germany, the visit of the Italian King, the *galantuomo* around whose name so much romance had gathered, had a triple significance as royal guest, as political friend, and even more as the liberator who had won for his people the unity which Germany herself was now enjoying, and Berlin’s tumultuous ovations voiced the sincere sentiments of the whole nation.

There was now no longer any reason why Italy should not join the union of the three Emperors, and a quadruple *entente* was formed. In throwing in her lot with the allies Italy gained practical help in case of need. Writing to the German ambassador in Paris on January 18, 1874, Bismarck told him, for the better knowledge of the French Government, that if Italy were to be attacked by France, either for reasons which affected German interests or without justification, Germany would at once go to her assistance. It was not until the autumn of 1875 that the Emperor returned the visit of the Italian King. Out of regard for the feelings of the dethroned Holy Father no reigning prince had set foot in royal Rome since the expulsion there from of the papal Government, and the meeting took place in Milan. Bismarck was prevented by ill-health from accompanying the Emperor, but Moltke was there, in token that behind the alliance was the army as well as the Crown and the nation.

Although in the minds of three of the partners the agreement of the four Powers thus consummated was not intended to be a demonstration against France, its immediate effect, none the less, was to leave France without hope of allies, and as a consequence to throw her back upon her own strength and resources. All the time that he had been working to secure friends for Germany, and to strengthen her military position, Bismarck had been endeavouring to exert a restraining influence upon the relations of France with other countries. After the war France was for a time too demoralized to be a source of danger. The feelings of the French towards their conquerors were those of a proud nation which believed that humiliation had come accidentally and undeserved. The presence in the country of an

army of occupation smarted like salt in a wound, yet France was helpless; at most she could give vent to her outraged feelings in paroxysms of impotent rage. Now and then public resentment found relief in indefensible acts, as when German soldiers were butchered in circumstances of gross cruelty and common juries refused to convict the murderers. Bismarck's self-restraint under such provocations was admirable. He might have retaliated with interest upon the vanquished foe, but he did not. "If crimes like premeditated murder go unredressed," he wrote to the German ambassador (December 7, 1871), "outraged feeling is apt to call for reprisals, since justice cannot be obtained. If it were possible for us to adopt the judicial attitude of Paris and Melun, the jus talionis would lead us to refuse to award punishment for the murder of Frenchmen did it occur within our jurisdiction. But the moral sense and the honourable respect of law which are peculiar to the German people make such a course impossible." Not often in his later dealings with weaker enemies did Bismarck make allowances so magnanimously.

In the meantime, Thiers, the old man eloquent – he was then well over seventy-four – applied himself with glowing patriotism and indomitable energy to the work of reconstruction. The first and most pressing task was the rehabilitation of the army. The war had left the army still more inferior to that of Germany, both in numbers and *moral,* than before, and to redress the inequality was a necessity of self-preservation. The nation warmly applauded the successive measures by which it was sought to make good the losses caused and the deficiencies brought to light by the war, and the needed money was voted readily by the legislature. For ten laborious years France was to work and live for the reorganization and strengthening of her defensive forces, until the time came when she should be able again to look out upon the world with confidence, conscious that her frontiers were secure and her homes safe against attack. To that end her manhood was trained and disciplined in arms and her wealth poured out with a prodigal hand. Universal service took the place of the old system of conscription, the exemptions were restricted, and the liability to serve with the colours for five years, and thereafter in the reserves for fifteen years, became the duty of all.

Germany was represented in Paris during the early years after the war by Count Harry Arnim, who had been Prussia's envoy to the

Vatican and had helped Bismarck in all but the final negotiations leading to the Treaty of Frankfort. Arnim was a man of great, almost of brilliant, abilities, yet of somewhat erratic judgment, full of self-confidence, readier to give than to receive advice, and ever eager to play the leading *rôle* in his own corner of the diplomatic stage. Bismarck accepted him as the Empire's representative in France on the strength of his past service and the excessive valuation of his friends; he was conscious of Arnim's failings, however, and knew that he would prove difficult to control. From the first he left Arnim in no uncertainty as to the attitude which he would be expected to hold and the aims which he would be required to pursue. He desired to see France regain strength, without becoming so strong as to become a menace to her late conqueror. Hence she was to be politically boycotted – to be excluded from the respectable society of the monarchies of of the Continent, and by this policy of isolation to be made incapable of mischief. In order to ensure her isolation the republican form of government was to be maintained, for Bismarck argued that so long as France continued to be a republic she would be unable to conclude alliances with monarchical Powers. "Our need," he wrote to Arnim in one of many despatches in which this standpoint was pressed upon him, "is to be left in quiet by France and to prevent France from having allies in case she does not intend to keep the peace." It was Arnim's duty, therefore, while endeavouring to cultivate relationships of confidence and cordiality with France, though in the possibility of these Bismarck only half believed, to watch carefully and counteract any steps which the French Government might take to form close friendships with other Powers. There was another reason for Bismarck's determination to resist a monarchical revival, and it was the fact that the French monarchists were closely allied to the Ultramontanes, with whom in Germany he was now at war.

Bismarck soon found, to his annoyance, that he did not receive from the versatile ambassador in Paris the compliance and support which he expected. Arnim's mind ran on altogether different lines from his own. An aristocrat *pur sang*, and a monarchist by deep conviction, he believed that the principle of monarchism was one and indivisible, and that republics, especially when created by violence, existed only in order to be overturned. His ideas on the subject of

legitimism, democratic government, and the "solidarity of Conservative interests," were those, in fact, of feudal Toryism, characteristic of the Pomeranian soil upon which he had been raised, and once formed were not to be moved. Unhappily for Arnim, as it proved, he had a sympathetic ally in the Emperor, whose strong convictions on the subject of the divine rights of Sovereigns, as opposed to sovereign peoples, prevented him from endorsing his Chancellor's preference for republican institutions in France. Honestly sharing the Emperor's legitimist views, Arnim made the mistake of parading to the point of importunacy his warm sympathies with the Bonapartist movement. Not only did he persistently press his ideas upon Bismarck, but he urged him to commend them to the Emperor, of course without success. "As long as France has no allies," Bismarck again wrote to him (December, 1872), "she will not be dangerous to us, and as long as the great European monarchies hold together, no Republic will be dangerous to them. On the other hand, a French Republic will not readily find a monarchical ally against us. This being my conviction, it is impossible that I should advise his Majesty the King to encourage the French Monarchical Right, a proceeding which would involve the strengthening of an Ultramontane element which is hostile to us."

Undeterred by repeated rebuffs, and still as convinced as ever that he, the man on the spot, knew better than his chief in Berlin what was good both for France and Germany, Arnim did not hesitate to go behind Bismarck's back in his determination to discredit with the Emperor the official policy of which he was supposed to be the mouthpiece and to win approval for his own policy of sentiment. From that time Bismarck's attitude towards him changed from that of vigilant distrust to one of active antagonism.

The fact that Chancellor and ambassador were thus at variance did not improve the relationships between the two Governments. In France especially there grew a steady undercurrent of suspicion that Germany's attitude was purposely hostile and that she contemplated another attack. Early in 1873 this apprehension led M. Thiers to challenge Arnim on the subject. "Is it true," he asked, "that your Government seeks another war with France as soon as we have paid the indemnity? I am sure you will tell me the truth." Arnim gave the assurance "as a man of honour" that neither the Emperor nor his

advisers nor the German nation "planned, intended, or desired war." With this assurance M. Thiers was satisfied, declaring for his part that France sincerely wanted "la paix, la paix, et toujours la paix." Just before this Bismarck had written to the ambassador, in reply to a despatch of January 22nd: "We do not want war, but we are ready to wage it again at any time if new presumption on the part of France makes it necessary. *Oderint dum metuant.*"

The outlook of France became clouded at this time by events at home. The Monarchists and Clericals, making common cause, had worked with growing boldness for a double restoration, of monarchy at home and of the papal power in Rome. The death of Napoleon at Chislehurst, in Kent (January 9, 1873), had further raised their hopes, and there were critical moments when the stability of the republic seemed to be seriously endangered. In May the coalition proved strong enough to overthrow the sagacious and peace-loving burgher-President, M. Thiers, and to give to France in his place a military head in the person of Marshal MacMahon. Arnim at first welcomed the change as an important stage on the way towards the monarchical restoration for which he wished and had secretly been working. To Bismarck, on the other hand, the apparent shock to the republic was a severe blow, and in his disappointment he was disposed to attribute to the unruly ambassador more blame than was his just due. Arnim's sin in Bismarck's eyes was not that he mixed in French politics, for that was meant to be part of his business, but that he did it in the wrong way. Moreover, bearing in mind the ambassador's undisguised and successful attempts to influence the Emperor against the Government's policy, he regarded the incident as the first-fruits of a deliberate conspiracy to challenge his own position. Arnim seemed to have won the first round in what was now a personal contest, at once of skill and strength, but he was determined that it should be the last.

MacMahon, exercising the presidential prerogative, called the Due de Broglie, a noble of the old order and an adherent of the Monarchical-Clerical party, to form a Cabinet. Under the new *régime* the relationship between the two countries at once changed for the worse. Thanks to Thiers's untiring efforts, the last instalment of the indemnity was paid in September, 1873, and with the money went the last remnant of the force of occupation. The payment was made on the 3rd of the month, and five days later not a German soldier remained

on French soil. France was again free to go her own way and follow her own devices without restraint. The national elation aroused by this relief stimulated anew the desire for revenge, and the reactionary parties did not fail to turn it to their own purposes.

Bismarck's suspicion that the Clericals were the special danger of France seemed to be justified at that time. They were behind the intrigues for the subversion of the republic; they were perpetually conspiring with Rome; and they kindled warlike passions with incredible levity. Several of the bishops whose sees adjoined the frontier, enraged by the bitter confessional conflict now in progress across the Rhine, where the repressive laws associated with the name of Dr. Falk had already been proposed, made themselves conspicuous by the vehemence with which they preached a crusade of vengeance and called down fire from Heaven upon a Power which had desecrated France and was now laying violent hands upon Holy Church. These outbursts passed unrebuked by the authorities, and even Arnim ignored them officially until a despatch from Berlin recalled him to a sense of duty as the guardian of his country's dignity. Yielding to Bismarck's insistence that such incitements to lawlessness must cease, the Government early in January severely reprimanded the fire-eating bishops and suppressed one of the foremost of the Clerical newspapers, while the Foreign Minister, the Duc Décazes, offered to Germany a formal and sincere apology. So threatening were the portents, that Bismarck addressed to Germany's diplomatic representatives abroad a letter in which he declared that while Germany was actuated by peaceful sentiments towards France, "nevertheless, should it be placed beyond doubt that a collision was unavoidable, the German Government would not face before its conscience and the nation the responsibility of awaiting the time that might be most convenient for France."

However great may have been the guilt of the Clericals for the disorder into which France was thrown at that time, the nation was still more to blame. A mood of lassitude, restlessness, and discontent, with a deepening impatience of its warring parties, ad come over it, and in its unreasonable disappointment at Ministries which were neither worse nor better than itself it seemed to be in two minds, uncertain whether to hold fast to the new form of government or to revert to the old, and willing to be convinced either way by vehement

rhetoric or specious promises.

Arnim himself had now begun to recognize that under Thiers the republic had been more friendly towards Germany and a stronger safeguard for European peace than under a President who owed his elevation to a revolutionary coalition, and he so reported to Bismarck, only to be told with cutting sarcasm that his discovery was no discovery for Berlin and that for himself it had come too late. Before the year 1873 was out Bismarck had come to the conclusion that matters would not improve between Germany and France so long as Arnim continued in Paris. The two were still pulling against each other, and Arnim so far had seemed to be gaining ground; he had the ear of the Court, and a small body of influential Conservatives were conspiring to place him in the Chancellor's seat. There was also a black mark of another kind against him, for his banker, one Hansemann, had disclosed to Bismarck the fact that he had been speculating over the French war loans in conjunction with a Paris financier named Hirsch, and had made handsome gains thereby. Against his will the restless diplomatist was recalled from Paris in February, 1874, and was offered the embassy at Constantinople, to take or leave as he willed, while Prince Hohenlohe, changing the service of his native Bavaria, was nominated to Paris in his stead.

Arnim's later career has no direct interest for these pages, and may be summarized in a few sentences. His suspension from office was a fatal blow to his pride and, unfortunately, to his composure. Like many another man, before and after him, fatally endowed with excess of temperament, he lost self-control under affront, and having once slipped his moorings his course ended, as it was bound to do, in disaster. Arnim had never endorsed Bismarck's policy towards the Roman Catholic Church, or abandoned his belief that if his advice had been taken at the beginning there would have been no confessional conflict. In April there appeared in a Vienna newspaper a *pro-memoria* of Arnim's on the Infallibility question, together with letters addressed by him to Bishop Hefele and Dr. Döllinger in 1870, while he was envoy in Rome, and these were followed by communications to Berlin and Breslau newspapers on the same subject. The obvious purpose of the publication of these documents was to create the impression that Bismarck had woefully blundered over the *Kulturkampf*, and that had a wiser man been in charge of affairs the nation would have been

spared an unspeakable misfortune. Arnim's action in stirring up domestic strife in this way – for he had himself supplied the documents to the Press, although on being challenged by the Chancellor he at first denied it – was an unpardonable breach of official etiquette, and was treated as such. Bismarck answered first by publishing his reasons for rejecting Arnim's too easy solution of the Infallibility problem, and therewith a report of the ambassador's in which he was shown as throwing doubt upon the propriety of his own proposals, then by calling upon the indiscreet diplomat to explain the origin of the Vienna newspaper's disclosures. As Arnim was unable to clear himself, his appointment to Constantinople was cancelled and he was relieved of further service.

What followed was creditable neither to Arnim nor Bismarck. Hohenlohe on succeeding to the Paris embassy found that certain documents which should have been in the archives had been abstracted. Required to account for their disappearance, Arnim returned some but retained others on the plea that they were his private property. Without bandying words with the man who had tried and failed to humiliate him and undermine his position, Bismarck caused Arnim to be arrested in his own house on the charge of theft. Tried in Berlin, the fallen ambassador was acquitted of charges of purloining documents and of official misdemeanour, but was found guilty of conduct injurious to public order and was awarded three months' imprisonment. Both sides appealed against the sentence, which was eventually increased to nine months' imprisonment, though the penalty was never paid, since Arnim took refuge abroad. Beaten in a contest with an antagonist for whom he was no match, he now resorted to pamphlet-writing of a kind only to be excused by the deep sense of wrong under which he was suffering. For this he was prosecuted on a charge of high treason and sentenced to five years' imprisonment with hard labour, a penalty of which he again cheated his persecutors by refusing to leave foreign soil. Discredited in the law courts by compromising accusations, to which he made no reply, he was now dismissed from the service of the State and deprived of his pension, and he died in 1881, an outlaw, broken and embittered. The public verdict upon the Arnim episode and its issue belied August von Platen's words:

But small regard has human pain,

And wounded men unheeded fall;
A sick man's suffering neer was known
To hurt a healthy man at all.

There was general agreement that Bismarck's treatment of the ambassador was harsh and vindictive, and his later ingenious plea, that his motive was not personal revenge but rather "bureaucratic dogmatism on the part of a superior official whose authority had been disregarded," did not carry conviction.

To the new ambassador in Paris were given the same marching orders which his predecessor had received but had dis obeyed. "As to France," so Hohenlohe noted in his Diary at the time (May 2nd), "the chief point of interest for us was to see that she should not become so powerful internally and of so much weight externally as to secure for herself allies. A republic and internal dissensions were the best guarantee of peace." Bismarck went so far as to urge for the first time that France should be encouraged to entangle herself in Tunis, which was then attracting the attention of the French colonial party. "That," he said, "would be a good thing for us, as France would then busy herself in that quarter and would be held fast there." Hohenlohe pondered these things, but did not fail to note that the Emperor refused to endorse this too obvious policy of deliberately working for France's weakness. A certain antagonism of moral standards in statecraft is revealed by Hohenlohe in a report of a conversation of a few days later in which the Emperor criticized his Chancellor's policy. "He desired me," the new ambassador records, "to keep on the best terms possible with France. Bismarck specially emphasizes the point that France should not be too strong and desirable as an ally. That was all right. Yet it was neither proper nor possible that we should ourselves work for the destruction and demoralization of France."

Already, however, the Emperor had relinquished the substance of authority, and only the shadow remained in his hands. Bismarck was never more conscious and at the same time more jealous of his power than now. He managed foreign policy as if not the Emperor but he were Germany's ruler; he spoke to the Diet as a Coriolanus might have spoken to the assembly of the *plebs*; he was not only the head of the Government but the Government itself, and all his colleagues were but servitors overshadowed by his personality and ministering to his will. Prince Hohenlohe wrote of the old Emperor in his Diary on September

7, 1873: “He no longer has energy to oppose Bismarck or to decide on anything without first consulting him. All hopes of this must be entirely given up. Personally I abandoned hope long ago.” Not long afterwards the Crown Prince confessed to Sir Robert Morier that both the Emperor and he were “powerless before Bismarck.” It is doubtful whether the Emperor, who was now seventy-seven years old, was fully conscious of the extent to which his will had been broken and the servant had taken the master’s place. Nevertheless, the relations between the two continued unclouded, and on the Chancellor’s side were those of deep and even tender attachment, for he loved the old Emperor the more, the more he succeeded in bringing him under control.

During 1873 events occurred calling for the exercise of masterful intervention in a part of Europe with which Germany had hitherto had little to do, and the action taken called the attention of the Powers in a dramatic manner to the significance of Germany’s changed position in international affairs. Spain was again in the throes of insurrection. A republic had been set up in February, and in spite of the divisions and discords by which the nation was distracted, the Government, whose head was Marshal Serrano, had done well. There were two rival political parties, which seriously contended with the republicans for mastery in the much-disturbed country, and both represented members of the Bourbon dynasty. One of these parties sided with Don Alfonso, the young son of Isabel II, and the other with his cousin, Don Juan de Bourbon. The Alfonsists were indisposed to violent measures, convinced that if the republic were left alone it would sooner or later seal its own doom. The rival faction called itself after the name of Don Juan’s son, Don Carlos, who vigorously prosecuted the family claim, which his father eventually renounced in his favour. The Carlists, who had behind them the Roman Catholic clergy, with all the influence which it was able to exert in the rural districts, raised a formidable force of irregulars, which, working from France, kept the northern frontier districts in disorder and alarm, and in the summer of 1873 forcibly occupied large parts of the North.

In the course of one of the engagements fought in the following year a retired Prussian captain of artillery named Schmidt, who had gone to Spain in the capacity of military correspondent for the German Press, was captured, and, though his papers attested his

person and occupation, he was summarily shot as a spy after undergoing the farce of a court-martial trial. The news of the murder roused an angry feeling in Germany, and no one was more incensed than the Chancellor, who promptly ordered a German squadron, then anchoring before the Isle of Wight, to steam to the north coast of Spain. It was not clear what the ships would be able to do when they arrived there, since the Government of the country was still republican and friendly to all the enemies of the Carlists, but the act gave great satisfaction in Germany as a sign that the nation's interests were in strong hands.

In a speech made in the Diet later in the year (December 4th) Bismarck described the impression which the murder of Schmidt had made upon him. "My feeling," he said, "was this – that if he had been an English, an American, a Russian, or a French correspondent, the murder would not have occurred. I recalled all the old humiliations which Germany was formerly compelled to bear owing to her divisions, and I said to myself: 'It is time to accustom foreign countries to the idea that Germans, too, cannot be murdered with impunity.'" In August he went further, for with a view to strengthening the hands of the Government in power in its contest with Carlism and disorder, he formally recognized the republic and persuaded some of the other European Powers to do the same. Russia declined, however, to the satisfaction of France, which professed to see in her abstention a first rift in the lute of the quadruple *entente*. None the less, Bismarck now succeeded – where Serrano had failed – in inducing the French Government to check the abuse of hospitality of which the Carlists had been guilty in making the neutral territory north of the Pyranees a base for their lawless incursions into the neighbouring friendly State. Carlism itself was not destroyed by these reprisals, but the endeavours of the pretender were made doubly difficult, and no more German subjects were put to a violent death.

It was the relations with France which, more than any other consideration, determined the scope of the Army Bill which the Government brought forward in February, 1874, when the time came for revising the temporary arrangements sanctioned by the Diet in 1871. The bill, which as passed continued the peace strength at 402,000 men as before, could not fairly be regarded as a challenge by France, whose military preparations had been so accelerated that she

now commanded a fighting force twice as large as that which she had been able to put into the field in 1870; if figures represented realities, she would now have been able to mobilize nearly a million and a quarter men for service in the active army and over a million men in the territorial army. Nevertheless, the French army estimates for 1875 were fixed at 485 million francs and the peace strength at 461,000, figures both larger than the corresponding figures for Germany.

The feverish haste with which France was increasing her forces led Germany in 1874 to address to the French Government a formal protest and to the Great Powers collectively a letter of warning. Had France at the time been surer of her position, the affront might have led to complications. As it was, the remonstrance was answered with a disclaimer and a counter-accusation that Germany herself was the real menace to peace. It is doubtful whether any sane person seriously believed that France either desired or was prepared for war, since both her internal troubles and the still incomplete reorganization of her army would have made the risk too great. Nevertheless, all through the year 1874 Europe was disturbed by persistent rumours of impending evil. In the beginning of March Moltke said to the British ambassador in Berlin that "the idea of war was popular in Germany," that war was inevitable sooner or later, and that from his standpoint as a soldier it would be better that it should not be delayed too long. To the Belgian ambassador he was even more explicit. "He did not see," he told him on April 30th, "how Germany could avoid war next year, unless the Great Powers combined to persuade France to reduce her armaments to a reasonable peace establishment." About the same time also, Bismarck admitted to Hohenlohe his fear that the portents were unpropitious. "We want to keep peace with France," he said, "but if France goes on arming so that she may be ready in five years, and is bent on war at that time, then we will declare war in three years."

On the other hand, many of the friends of France suspected that the aggravation came from Bismarck's side, and that war was his aim. Hohenlohe relates that in October the Emperor objected to a reference to foreign affairs which his Chancellor proposed to put in a speech from the throne, as being "open to the construction that we were prepared to make war again upon France." "That was out of the question," he added; "he was too old to begin another war, and he

feared that Prince Bismarck was trying to drag him little by little into fresh hostilities." Hohenlohe tried to remove these doubts, but without success. "I shall fall out with Prince Bismarck again over this matter," the Emperor said, "and it would gratify me if you would put it before him once more from my point of view" – a frank confession that Bismarck and not he was now the true ruler of Germany.

When a statesman who has deliberately schemed three wars, and has only recently been accused of planning another, suddenly begins to protest the transparency of his motives and the innocence of his intentions, there is room for a suspicion that he is again meditating deeply on stratagems and spoils; let no such man be trusted! Defending his foreign policy in the Diet in the last month of 1874, Bismarck said: "In our foreign relations we have perfectly clean linen, and there is nothing whatever to conceal." Events occurred early in 1875 which cast grave doubts upon this confident assumption of virtue. Within four months Europe had come perilously near to a repetition of the catastrophe of 1870.

On April 5th the semi-official *Cologne Gazette* created unrest by a declaration that the increase of the French army was only to be explained on the assumption that it was a preparation for a war of revenge, and three days later the Berlin *Post* published an alarmist article with the title "Is war in sight?" The writer reviewed the European political situation, took measure of the various conditions and tendencies making for disturbance or tranquillity, weighed the possibility of Continental alliances, and without answering his question affirmatively came to the conclusion that the outlook was gloomy. "There are people," the article concluded, "who take the view that if the roof of a house is burning and a good fire brigade is in sight there is no need to awaken the sleepers in the stories below. We are not disposed to act thus towards the German nation. We do not regard it as desirable to disturb people's minds and call them to arms, but we do not think it expedient to conceal from the nation the realities of the situation and the dangers which confront its statesmen."

The origin of this article was never authoritatively established. Referring to it at a later date, Bismarck disowned paternity. Both in structure and tone, however, the article was one which he might either have prompted or written, and with the knowledge which we possess – and for which we are indebted to Bismarck himself – of his

intimate relations with the Press, and of the band of skilled journalistic mercenaries which he kept in his service, it is difficult to resist the belief that the inspiration of the article, if no more, originated in his calculating brain. That he was bent on war is very un likely, but he was certainly willing to accept it if France were so disposed, and the most charitable view is that the article was intended to take stock of the situation with a view to making it either better or worse.

The immediate effect of the "Is war in sight?" article was to throw not only France but all Europe into perturbation. Distant though she was from the nerve-centre of the Continent, as Berlin might be regarded at that time, England experienced the unfamiliar sensation of panic. Sober men, insusceptible to alarm, were carried away by the prevailing apprehension. Sir Robert Morier, whose opinion of Bismarck's political morality was of the lowest, thought the danger of war at that time so real that he addressed an eloquent appeal to the German Crown Prince beseeching him to use his influence in staying the malign forces which seemed to be leading Europe towards an abyss. Bismarck had few friends in the Courts of Europe, and two crowned heads at least suspected his hand in the prevailing turmoil. Queen Victoria expostulated with the Emperor, and entreated by her to intervene the Czar made urgent remonstrances in the same quarter. The British Government also, in a despatch addressed to the ambassador in Berlin, offered its services as friendly mediator with France, and also in the same indirect way invited the Governments of other leading Powers to use their influence in the cause of peace. Bismarck professed to welcome these well-intended overtures and to regard them as a token of good-will, but in fact he resented them deeply. So ill did he take the Queen's intervention that he returned to the subject in September in correspondence with the Emperor, and believing by that time that he was really far more innocent than he had claimed to be, complained bitterly of her "unfriendly proceeding."

This time the Emperor was firm; he was determined that there should be no war, and his Chancellor was told so. No sooner did it appear that the scare had miscarried than Bismarck tried to turn the scales against the critics who had ac cused him to his master. The real conspirators, he said, were in Paris, London, St. Petersburg, anywhere save in Berlin, and he, the reputed author of mischief, was the real

warden of the Continent's peace. The variety of Bismarck's explanations of the war scare showed great ingenuity, but also an uneasy conscience. In private correspondence he admitted that both Moltke and Count Münster might have spoken to the Government "theoretically of the utility of a timely attack on France," though he professed to know nothing definite as to what may have been in their minds. To Lord Odo Russell he complained that the trouble arose owing to the influential German Press being so much in the hands of the Jews. The theory reserved for the Emperor's special satisfaction was that the scare was due to the Stock Exchange speculations of the French Foreign Minister, the Due Décazes. In later years he was accustomed to say that Gortchakoff was at the bottom of the mischief.

That the crisis passed over without greater danger was due to the personal influence of the Czar more than to any other cause. Not only was the Czar resolved that peace should not be broken, but he was equally resolved that if France were to be involved against her will she should not stand alone. "My word will be sufficient to ensure peace to France," he had said to the French ambassador in St. Petersburg, General Leflô, in the middle of April, and he added that if Germany were to begin war without provocation and rightful cause she would not find herself in the same position as in 1870, for all Europe would be against her. "She would," he said, "go to war at her peril." Gortchakoff added his own assurances, and gave to the ambassador the parting counsel, "I have only one thing to say to you; see that you are strong." The relief felt by France when the danger was over and her gratitude to the friends of peace were a convincing proof that a desire for hostilities could not be laid to her account. When the war clouds had passed away, the French Foreign Minister wrote to St. Petersburg (April 28th), declaring that "the attitude of the Russian Court has averted from us an imminent danger," and acclaiming the Czar as "the arbiter of the world's peace." "I am ready to give the Czar," he added, "every guarantee he may wish that we have no thought of disturbing the peace of the world." Great Britain also earned France's good-will for her useful intervention.

The restoration of tranquillity was confirmed by a visit of the Czar to Berlin, accompanied by his Chancellor, in the second week of May. On that occasion Gortchakoff succeeded in inflicting upon Bismarck an indignity which was never forgiven or forgotten. After several days

of conversations between the Emperors and the Chancellors, Gortchakoff addressed to the Russian legations throughout Europe a despatch in which he used the words, "Now peace is assured (*maintenant la paix est assurée*): a conviction of its necessity has been brought home." The implication that before the conferences peace had been endangered, and that Berlin was the centre of disturbance, was too obvious to be ignored. Bismarck accepted the suggestion as a personal attack, and according to his own story he accused Gortchakoff to his face of having sought to pose as the apostle of peace out of pure vanity, adding the reminder that he was "a good friend to friends but a good enemy to enemies." The bitterness and mordant sarcasm of many of his later references to his Russian rival showed how keenly the affront had been felt. The episode had also important political consequences. For some time he had chafed under the Russian Chancellor's proneness to take Germany too cheaply: "You do not treat us as a friendly Power," he had told him, "*mais comme un domestique qui ne monte par assez vite quand on a sonné.*" The new exhibition of arrogance warned him that Gortchakoff could no longer be counted with confidence upon the list of Germany's friends.

Gortchakoff was vain enough, and apt to magnify himself and his performances, and he may have welcomed the opportunity of humiliating a statesman whom he used to regard as his pupil, but was now no longer able to patronize as of old, yet his attitude on this occasion was more than a pose. In his intercourse with the diplomats and generals of Berlin he had formed the conviction that the recent alarm had a genuine foundation, and that the expediency of an attack upon France had really been considered. The Czar himself was convinced that the scare had been created purposely by Bismarck in order to relieve the pressure of domestic troubles, yet that it was not intended to be more than a scare. In the following January he said to the German ambassador in St. Petersburg that while he personally had no doubt whatever as to the sincerity of Bismarck's protestations of pacific intentions, "the ambassador must not be offended if he said that this view was not generally held."

Conscious of the danger through which the Empire had passed while the federal Governments had been kept in ignorance that mischief was brewing, the Würtemberg Minister- President wrote tactfully to Bismarck suggesting that for the future the special

committee for foreign affairs created by the constitution should be taken into confidence and counsel in critical times. Bismarck took the implied reproach in good part, and promised to act upon the Minister's suggestion.

In later years Bismarck was wont to date from Gortchakoff's irritating telegram the coolness which sprang up in the relations between Russia and Germany. It would be truer to say that it was the episode in which the telegram was but a minor incident that tried the strength of the entente between these Powers. We have seen that in joining the two neighbouring empires Russia gave no pledge and no sign of hostility to France; rather that her act was intended to prevent the very isolation of the Republic which was the real purpose of Bismarck's astute diplomacy. The events of April and May were to the Czar a clear proof that Germany was bent upon pressing France too hard. Such a policy was bound to modify Russia's attitude, and it did, in fact, cause her to turn henceforth friendlier glances towards the far West of Europe. Two years before this, Thiers, ever sanguine on the subject of alliances, had suggested to Lord Lyons the advisability of an entente between France, Russia, and Great Britain, and although warned by the British Foreign Secretary that the idea was premature, he had let it be known in St. Petersburg that France was ready to give or receive serious overtures. Now it seemed as though the first steps towards the realization of his dream were to be taken. It was certain that if Germany and Russia fell out France would not be slow to seize her chance of making good the misfortune of 1870.

As yet, however, there was no outward change in the relations between Russia and Germany, and years were to pass before any positive strain became visible. Bismarck, seeing in Gortchakoff the fountain and origin of mischief, comforted himself by the thought that his rival had passed his prime and was losing favour and influence with the Czar. Just as, when it became clear that Beust's power was waning, he had made court to Count Andrassy, so now, foreseeing the eclipse of Gortchakoff, he turned his eyes to the new star now rising in the East, M. de Giers, who became Gortchakoff's assistant at the Foreign Office in 1875 and was already marked as his successor there.

In the story of the dark intrigue of the spring of 1875 the conduct of the aged Emperor stands out in bright relief. He had hated the idea of war, and no sooner was the scare over than he hastened to undo the

mischief which it had caused in France. A week after the Czar had returned home he sent his ambassador back to Paris (May 18th) with a conciliatory message. Hohenlohe relates how, after the Emperor had spoken of "the friction between himself and Prince Bismarck," he added: "Give my compliments to Marshal MacMahon, and say to him that you are not the only messenger of peace, but that the real messenger of peace stands here."

Soon after the "Is war in sight?" incident the chagrins even more than the cares of office led Bismarck seriously to contemplate retirement. In a pressing letter to the Emperor (May 4th), in which he pleaded that owing to bad health his power to serve the State was exhausted, he begged for his discharge on the pension to which his service entitled him. A man of humours and of many nerves, Bismarck's wish to escape from harness appears this time to have been genuine. In conversation with Lord Odo Russell in the previous November he had explained how his life had fallen into periods of twelve years, and being then "sixty and worn out with the responsibilities and anxieties of office," he said it was his intention to begin the sixth span by retiring into private life. Convinced of his own and the country's need of the weary Chancellor, the Emperor agreed to a long rest, but refused to allow him to resign, and bade him keep his design secret. Bismarck accordingly remained in rural retreat for some months, consulted only by the Emperor on matters of exceptional moment, but before the end of the year he was able to return to Berlin and duty.

The war scare of the spring seemed to clear the air, and for a time the relations between the German and French Governments became uncommonly friendly. Developments in the internal affairs of France helped in this direction. The most notable of these was the rising storm of opposition to crozier rule. Under MacMahon the Clericals showed their colours openly as enemies of the Republic and plotters for the restoration of monarchy and through it of ecclesiastical domination. Hence the struggle in France for all parties which professed, under whatever name, to sympathize with the ideas of Liberalism and liberty became a struggle with the immutable Church. "Le cléricalisme, voilà l'ennemi," was the battle-cry with which, in a speech at Romans in September, 1878, the fiery Gambetta rallied the forces of political and intellectual progress for the resumption of "the

struggle between the agents of the theocracy of Rome and the sons of 1789." The elections of October resulted in the defeat of the Government and brought in the Cabinet of M. Dufaure, in which M. Waddington, a Protestant in whose veins ran English blood, and who had also been educated in England, was the Foreign Minister.

The relations between Germany, France, and Great Britain at this time were peculiar, for while the first two were throwing friendly glances across the Channel, Bismarck was doing his best to establish influence over France. He was now building expectations upon Gambetta, both as a passionate champion of the Republic and a bitter antagonist of the Papacy. In 1877 he had allowed Count Henckel von Donnersmarck, a Silesian colliery proprietor who dabbled in politics, to open confidential negotiations with him in Paris in the hope of winning him for his campaign against the Jesuits and Rome. He had long wanted to meet Gambetta, who was himself willing, yet he had refrained from proposing a meeting from a belief that it might compromise the French tribune and so incapacitate him from doing Germany service. Gambetta, for his part, was then wishful for a *rapprochement* between the two countries, and the assurance which had been conveyed to him that the best way of promoting one was "a determined attitude against Rome" was entirely to his mind. Neverthe less, attracted though he was to Bismarck on personal grounds, and highly susceptible to the attentions which had been bestowed upon him, he was clear-sighted enough to recognize that the interests of France called still more for a good understanding with Russia and Great Britain, and this he furthered. In a conversation with the Prince of Wales in Paris in July, 1878, he even proposed a formal Anglo-French alliance, and possibly he meant it sincerely, though his emotions were notoriously uncertain and ephemeral. During Dufaure's Government a beginning was made with the anti-clerical legislation which was later to acquire so great a prominence in French political life.

In January, 1879, MacMahon, who had resisted repeated incitements to subvert the constitution and restore the monarchy in the person of the Comte de Chambord, resigned on a question of military policy, and the National Assembly, refusing another soldier-President, though one offered himself in the person of General Chanzy, elected M. Grévy, then President of the Chamber. The change

seemed to indicate that a soberer appreciation of facts prevailed in France, and that the nation was seriously bent upon the maintenance of peace both at home and abroad. It fell to M. Waddington to form the next Cabinet, while Gambetta became President of the Chamber, waiting his turn at the helm. Within a year M. Waddington had resigned, and the Freycinet Ministry, of which M. Ferry was the best-known member, followed. Gambetta's partiality for Bismarck had in the meantime been rudely shaken by the Austro- German alliance of October, 1879, which he regarded as aimed directly at France, on which account he tried to establish more intimate ties with Great Britain. For such endeavours, however, the times were now unpropitious. Causes of friction had arisen between the two countries in different parts of the world, and above all there was setting in the Egyptian darkness which was for many years to obscure their relations as custodians of the interests of Europe on the Nile.

Bismarck was not slow to turn the altered situation to advantage, and when in September, 1880, Freycinet was succeeded by M. Ferry, France and Germany began seriously to make reciprocal advances. The elections took place in August of the following year, and showed France to be still in a steady mood. Against 57 Bonapartists and 41 Monarchists, 459 Republicans were returned.

This powerful confirmation of the Republic was largely the work of Gambetta, who, on Ferry's resignation in November, became Premier and Foreign Minister. His administration proved of too short duration to produce great changes either abroad or at home, and when on the last day of 1882 he died, at the age of forty-four, from misadventure, German influence seemed still to be in the ascendant and the budding Franco- Russian entente to be a thing of the past. After three other Ministries had rapidly run their course, M. Ferry was again called to form a Cabinet in February, 1883, and with his second return to power France and Germany for a time worked together in unaccustomed harmony.

In spite of the bitterness of party passion, which gave to the Republic eighteen administrations in little over twenty years, the work of national reorganization and reconstruction, the common task and interest of all parties alike, had made further progress since 1875. After prodigious exertions and sacrifices it could be claimed that the fabric of national security, which had been so sorely battered in the

great war, was at last renewed, and that France had regained all her lost strength and confidence. The nation seemed to have finally settled down to the new form of government; Louis Napoleon had died in exile; his only son, the Prince Imperial, had fallen on the battlefield in Zululand in England's service (June, 1879); and though the Princes of the royal houses still intrigued according to their ability, many of the foremost of their adherents in public life had in course of time deserted the cause of restoration as impolitic and hopeless. "We need a powerful France," Gortchakoff had said to the British ambassador in Berlin. "Be strong!" was the advice which he gave to French ambassadors and War Ministers on every possible occasion and in every gradation of urgency. It seemed that the strong France had arrived, dangerous as an enemy yet no less desirable as friend and ally.

The decade which had just opened saw France committed to a new era of colonial enterprise, and here Germany readily gave her a helping hand. Prussia founded the pillars of her later strength, the army and the national system of education, in the darkest hour of her humiliation in the nineteenth century – the seven years which came between Jena and Leipzig. For France, too, the first task to be faced after the disaster of 1870 had been the rebuilding of the army which, trusted not wisely but too well, had failed in the time of supreme trial. Yet even in the early years of despondency there were Frenchmen who turned their gaze again outward, following upon fields of imperialistic adventure the eternal quest of glory and prestige for their country's sake. France had long turned envious eyes towards Tunis, the annexation of which she had seriously contemplated and might have carried out as early as 1868 had not Bismarck at that time put in a speculative claim on Prussia's behalf. During the Berlin Congress of 1878 Bismarck changed his mind and reminded M. Waddington, the French plenipotentiary, of the attractions of that still unappropriated territory. Two years later, in 1880, the German Government openly encouraged France to establish herself in Morocco. In November of that year Bismarck authorized Prince Hohenlohe, still ambassador in Paris, to tell the French Premier that so far as Germany was concerned France might annex where she could – in North Africa, West Africa, or the East – and fight, if she wished, by land or sea, so long as no glances were turned to Strassburg or Metz. Still later, at the end of

1882, he told Hohenlohe, “If the French want the English to give them a free hand in Syria, it does not matter to us. The French are to be allowed to do what they like everywhere, so long as they keep away from the Rhine.”

In May, 1881, with Germany’s support and regardless of British protests, France proclaimed a protectorate in Tunis, to the deep mortification of Italy, which had likewise cherished the hope of gaining, with the assent of the Powers, this outpost of the ancient Roman Empire. Almost the French may be said to have been pushed into the country by Bismarck, who was only too pleased to see Germany’s restless neighbour dissipate her political interests and military resources in foreign enterprises. The official attitude of Great Britain in the matter had been inconsistent and contradictory. At the Berlin Congress Lord Salisbury, her second plenipotentiary, had, like Bismarck, encouraged France to annex the country. In a letter of that time (August 7, 1878) to M. Waddington, then Foreign Secretary, he had given the assurance that the British Government would not “view with distrust the legitimate and increasing influence of France” in that region, and hinting that “even the fall of the Bey’s Government, were it to come about, would in no way change the attitude of England, who has no interests of her own there.” Later attempts made by Lord Salisbury to weaken the effect of these encouragements were received by his countrymen as a confession that he had gone farther than prudence warranted. Constantly pressed by the French Government to declare himself openly in favour of annexation, he nevertheless declined to go to the length of a public approval, though he was always prepared, as he told Lord Lyons, to view such action by France without remonstrance. His successor at the Foreign Office, Lord Granville, maintained a severer attitude. “The French”, he wrote to Lord Lyons on April 5, 1881, “cannot be allowed to seize Tunis without the consent of Turkey and communication with the rest of Europe.” Yet the French did seize Tunis, and that with the connivance of Germany only, the rest of Europe not being consulted. The day after Lord Granville thus wrote the French Government assured Lord Lyons that it had no intention to annex the country, and that such a step would be for France"a mistake and a misfortune,” and this assurance was duly conveyed to the Italian ambassador in London in complete confidence. Nevertheless, fortified by the knowledge of Bismarck’s

acquiescence, France concluded the Treaty of Kassar Said on May 12th, by which Tunis passed under her protection, as a prelude to formal appropriation at a more convenient season.

Honestly indignant at the irregular proceeding, the British Government now put its foot down, and warned the French imperialists that though Tunis had been taken against its protests it would not look on quietly if the same tactics were repeated in regard to Tripoli. A fit of righteousness had come over the British Cabinet, and it might have done more had it been able, but Lord Salisbury's action and the appropriation of Cyprus three years before made England at the time a weak advocate of the integrity of the Sultan's empire. The warning drew a virtuous disclaimer of any designs in that quarter. In the previous year, indeed, M. Freycinet, in conversation with the Italian ambassador in Paris (July 25, 1880), had advised Italy not to make French designs upon Tunis a grievance, but to prepare for the acquisition of Tripoli. From that time may be dated France's formal recognition of that Turkish province as falling within the Italian sphere of influence. On May 11, 1884, M. Ferry honoured his predecessor's bond when he assured the Italian ambassador, "privately, in the strictest confidence," that if Italy wished to occupy Tripoli France would offer no opposition.

Two years after Tunis was thus definitely marked out for French occupation, Madagascar likewise became virtually a French possession, though the transaction was only regularized by international treaty seven years later. Between 1884 and 1886 Annam and Tonquin also came under French rule. While all these acquisitions were being made Bismarck looked on approvingly. The arrangement was, in fact, equally advantageous for both sides. If Germany gave her support to France in her enterprises in North-West Africa and elsewhere, as well as in the serious controversies which had arisen in Egypt, she could count upon timely French help in her colonial difficulties with Great Britain, and particularly in the West African (Congo) conference of 1884-1885. France seemed all at once to have forgotten the enmities born of humiliation in 1870, and to have put interest in the place of pride. The statesman had played his cards well who could draw from the Paris *Temps* in 1884 a frank admission of the cordiality of Franco-German relations and the flattering tribute, "It is remarkable that we have come so far as to ask whether our country is

not about to enter, at least tacitly, the concert of the Powers which has been formed around the Prusso-Austrian alliance, and whether Bismarck will not succeed in drawing us into the ambit of German policy and ranging us in a system whose true name is German hegemony."

But now the dream of a truce to the old feuds was to be dispelled. Before a year had passed a sequence of events began which proved that a Franco-German *entente* was unnatural, and that in seeking it the Ferry Cabinet had not represented the nation's true feeling. The bare prospect of a formal peace with the victors of 1870 revived passions which had slowly been subsiding, and once more the Monarchists and Clericals, seeing their chance, renewed the old agitations and intrigues. Ferry fell early in 1885, discredited by the dis aster which befel French arms in Tonquin, and for France the next three years were the most dangerous since 1871. The persistent leaning to Cæsarism, the desire to be mastered and ruled by a strong man – that paradoxical trait in a national character essentially democratic and individualistic – once more asserted itself. It seemed as though the days of the Republic were numbered, and that the nation might easily have been won back to the monarchy if only a strong dictator had been ready to lead the way. General de Galliffet was thought for a time to be the Monk who would usher in the restoration, but later, and as it appeared with greater reason, the monarchists fixed their hopes upon General Boulanger.

Ferry gave place to Brisson, and after several months (January, 1886) Freycinet formed his third Cabinet. In this Cabinet Boulanger was the Minister of War. Now began between France and Germany a feverish rivalry in military measures which seemed to be a crowning preparation for the second struggle which had been so long deferred. Boulanger wanted both a larger and a better trained army; the peace strength was to be increased to over half a million. Bismarck promptly answered with an Army Bill increasing Germany's peace strength from 427,000 to 468,000, once more for seven years. While, however, the German Chancellor, though aided by all the influence of the generals, failed to move the Diet, the French War Minister for a time seemed to carry all before him. Freycinet resigned, indeed, in December, and was followed by M. Goblet, but Boulanger remained in office, the "strong man" of the Cabinet, the favourite of the Chamber, and the idol of the

nation. Never since the time when Gambetta had seared upon the soul of France, with the branding-iron of his fiery eloquence, the adjuration "Think always of revenge, but speak of it never!" had a man arisen who seemed to interpret so faithfully the ever-present longing of a proud people to retrieve defeat and restore its shattered self-esteem. From being the Minister of a party Boulanger became the head of a party himself, and a Boulanger cultus began. Renewed intrigues by the Comte de Paris, encouraged by the disturbed state of public opinion, led to the expulsion of the Princes as a measure of national safety, while all the time the true danger of the Republic was its own infatuation for a military adventurer who was only too ready to lead it to ruin. At the end of 1886 Boulanger had a majority of the Chamber on his side, and signs were not wanting that France was prepared to welcome him as a dictator.

Bismarck watched the events in France with apprehension, yet the Diet refused to share his anxiety. Internal dissensions handicapped him at a time when national security required that parties should present a united front. He had now surrendered to the Papacy on most points, yet the Centre party, which held the balance of power, remained as implacable as before; the Socialists were exasperated by the repressive measures from which they were suffering; and the Liberal parties had been strengthened both in numbers and resolve by the policy of Protection which had been forced upon the country against its will. Bismarck asked support for his Army Bill on the ground of imperious necessity, but it was evident from the beginning that its fate would be decided by other considerations than the needs of national defence. Replying to the suggestion that if the Government were placed beyond Parliamentary control in military matters for seven years it would raise taxes wherewith to go to war at its convenience, so repeating the illegality of 1864, he said: "We have no needs that must be satisfied by war. Germany belongs to the 'saturated States' of which Prince Metternich spoke. Under no circumstances shall we attack France. The stronger we are, the more improbable will be war. But if France has any reason to believe that she is more powerful than we, war is assured." This one-sided argument did not convince the majority of the Diet. In speech after speech he appealed, warned, and admonished by turn, but in vain.

Moltke likewise stepped into the breach, but again his weighty

words lost their spell. “I believe,” said the old soldier, “that no Sovereign will willingly take upon himself the responsibility of throwing a torch into the combustible material which is more or less accumulated in all countries. Strong Governments are a pledge of peace. But popular passions, the ambitions of party leaders, a public opinion misguided by word and writing – all these are elements which may prove stronger than the will of the Governments. Such a position might occur if this bill, whose purpose is the maintenance of peace, were rejected. Then I believe that we should certainly have war.” Even this pointed reference to Boulanger and the danger of a military dictatorship in France failed to convince. The Conservatives and National Liberals were heartily for the bill, but the Clericals, Radicals, and Social Democrats were working in co-operation, and they held a majority. No sooner had the Opposition negatived the first clause of the bill, increasing the peace strength, than without waiting for further rebuffs the Chancellor produced from his pocket an imperial message dissolving the Diet.

In the hope of dividing his opponents Bismarck had approached the Pope with a request that he would instruct his advocates in the Diet to support the Government. There were conditions to be complied with before this could be done – more capitulations on the ecclesiastical question – but these having been satisfied, Cardinal Antonelli, the Secretary of State, in January, 1887, wrote to the papal nuncio in Munich a letter notifying him that inasmuch as the Prussian Government had given “formal assurances” that the exceptional laws against the clergy were about to be revised the Pope wished the Centre party to support the bill. For once the leaders of the party were wanting in respect for the Holy See. This letter was communicated to Baron von Franckenstein, Dr. Windthorst, and several other deputies in the inner councils of the party, but it went no farther. Only after the Centre had voted in a body against the bill were the rank and file informed of what had taken place.

Now began a bad time for Germany – one of those periodical panics into which nations which lack the steadying influence of a sound and well-informed public opinion are ever prone to fall. The nation’s infinite capacity for taking alarm was illustrated as seldom before, and the Government spared no effort to turn to advantage the scare which it had created. Thanks to much stampeding of volatile

emotions, more creditable to the heart than the head, a large section of the nation seriously believed that the fatherland was really in danger, and the belief called forth a wave of patriotic enthusiasm which swept the opponents of the Septennate into discredit and oblivion. Leaving nothing to chance, however, Bismarck induced the Pope to repeat with emphasis his disregarded wish that the Centre party should support the Government. This time the papal admonition was published independently of the leaders of the party, making suppression impossible.

The elections took place towards the end of February. Bismarck had relied on, and had skilfully schemed, a combination or Cartel consisting of the two Conservative groups and the National Liberals, and the result exceeded his expectations, for the allied parties gained seventy seats, giving them a majority of twenty. On the other hand, the Radicals and Socialists were reduced by more than one-half, the People's Party disappeared, and even the Centre lost ground. The defeated parties were not slow to take their lesson to heart. When the Diet met in March the Army Bill was reproduced and passed in two days almost without alteration. In its favour there voted 223 deputies and against it only 23; the Clericals for the most part abstained. It was during the parliamentary debates on this bill that Bismarck informed France that if she made an unprovoked attack upon Germany she would be "bled to death."

Three years before this (1882) Bismarck had been successful in concluding the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria- Hungary, and Italy. He had now the satisfaction of seeing its renewal for five years, though this satisfaction was dulled by the knowledge that feelers were being put forward in various directions testing the possibility of a closer approach between Russia and France. An endeavour made to draw Spain into the alliance, though forwarded by the Government then in power, failed, but only narrowly.

For France the enthusiastic response of Germany to the call of her Chancellor was at once sobering. Even the hot spirits who had been clamouring for revenge were persuaded by this clear warning that the "watch upon the Rhine" was no mere poetic fiction, and that another war, if it came, would, in Bismarck's phrase, be "mere child's play" as compared with the last. M. Grévy pronounced a blessing upon peace and all peace-makers, and strove to win the Republic back to quiet

ways. Yet still the pixies of mischief continued to make trouble. An untoward frontier incident occurred in April in Alsace, where a French police commissary, by name Schnaebele, wanted by the German authorities, was first enticed upon hostile soil and then arrested. The Paris Press protested vigorously, but the prompt release of the prisoner, by Bismarck's orders, baulked betimes what threatened to become a critical affaire. Prompt amends were similarly made later in the year, when a German soldier shot a French workman who had crossed the frontier, in the belief that he was a poacher. Before the French Government had had time to demand recompense Bismarck sent an offer of £2,500, the acceptance of which satisfactorily closed the incident.

In May Boulanger fell with the Goblet Cabinet, never to rise more, and in December of the same year the weak President Grévy resigned in consequence of a relative's misdemeanour, in which he was wholly unconcerned. For nearly three years Boulanger continued to be a disturbing element in French and European politics. Over Paris he had thrown an unaccountable spell. There he received the homages which are usually reserved for Kings; even the Socialists, who refused to pay tribute to worth, bowed down to this pinchbeck hero, and in January, 1889, returned him to the Chamber by a triumphant majority, willing to accept him either as comrade or dictator. Three months later Boulanger fled the country rather than face a trial on a charge of treason to its laws, and France knew him no more, for he died abroad. Acclaimed and idolized for a time as few of the new men of modern France had been, he proved, after all, to be a creature of very common clay, and his bubble reputation shared the fate of all phantoms of the air, and sooner than most. He came into prominence for the first time in 1885, and in 1889 he was forgotten. Yet for France and Germany equally the years during which he seemed to have his country's fate altogether in his hands were a time of intense suspense and anxiety. The private letters written during 1887-1888 by Moltke, who was not unduly nervous where war was concerned, show that he was all that time *en vedette*, ready for any sudden summons to produce his battle plans.

FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1875-1885 - THE EASTERN QUESTION

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THE YEAR 1875, WHICH saw the shadow of war fall again upon Europe, brought into new prominence the perennial problem of Ottoman rule. Lord Aberdeen had predicted that the Crimean War might for twenty-five years protect the peace of Europe from disturbance through the Eastern question. He was too hopeful; before that time had passed Russia was again at war with her old enemy. Turkish misgovernment had become worse instead of better, and the Christian populations upon whom its harshest rigours fell still cried in vain for relief. Roumania had been formed in 1861 out of the Danubian provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia, and with the choice, five years later, of Prince Charles of Hohenzollern as ruler had entered upon a career of peace and prosperity. The spirit of independence had become stronger in the other Balkan territories, and particularly in Bulgaria and Serbia, yet there had been no corresponding weakening of the Porte's effective sovereignty. The government of its subject races was now, as before, that of a despotism varied on the one side by massacre, on the other by revolt. At intervals the Powers conferred and made proposals of reform, but without any serious intention of reopening a question which was complicated by many and perilous difficulties.

Bismarck had said in 1867: "The Orient lies so far away that I do not even read the reports of our ambassador in Constantinople." That attitude of comfortable detachment could not last indefinitely. Since then the Orient had been brought appreciably nearer to the consciences of the Powers by the hopeless, unchanging monotony of Ottoman misrule. Bismarck tried as long as possible to prevent the question from becoming so acute as to compel diplomatic measures, but the more the Turk paraded his incapacity or unwillingness to reform himself, the more urgent became the need for external pressure. The Eastern question meant more, however, than Turkish misrule; behind it were the old British jealousy of Muscovite aggression, the problem of the Slavic races in the Balkans, and above all the rival ambitions in that corner of Europe of Russia and Austria. It was one of the settled purposes of Bismarck's foreign policy to prevent the entrance into the line of political vision of any question that might lead to difficulty between these two Powers, with both of which it was of vital importance that Germany should work harmoniously. Not without reason, therefore, was he conscious of the

need for walking warily upon a path so thorny and treacherous.

No sooner was the Franco-German War at an end than an ominous stirring occurred at the opposite end of the Continent. Early in 1871 Serbia asked if it would be untimely to suggest the cession to her of Bosnia and Herzegovina, still under direct Turkish government. Russia and Austria both opposed the idea, and it was not pressed. It was publicly said at that time that Bismarck supported the Serbian claim, but the *Official Gazette* contradicted the suggestion; neither by word, sign, nor inference, it said, had he favoured an act so unfriendly to Austria. To Russia the disclaimer seemed unnecessarily emphatic, for it suggested that if the time ever came for Bismarck to take sides on the Oriental question it would be in support of Austrian rather than Russian interests. All the more necessary, therefore, did it appear to Russia that she should make clear her claim to be regarded as the protector of Serbs, as of the other Slavic races under Turkish rule. When in the following autumn, after the cordial meetings of the German and Austrian Emperors at Salzburg and Gastein, the Czar received Prince Milan of Serbia at Livadia, it was with the flattering greeting, "I receive your Highness as my own child."

Thus the *entente* of the three Emperors had scarcely been completed before Bismarck had begun to experience the disappointment of the man who tries to be on friendly terms with two rivals whose interests seem fated to go apart. In his difficult position he resolved to observe still more scrupulously a strict attitude of impartiality. In July, 1872, just before the imperial meeting in Berlin, he had declared: "I am not carrying on a Russian and still less a West European or an Austrian policy. Diplomacy must accustom itself to my German way of looking at things." At that time the "German way of looking at things" was to turn a blind eye to all inconvenient problems of Eastern politics, and so long as he was able it was upon this principle that Bismarck continued to act. It was the spectre of the Eastern question, growing ever larger and clearer, which drew from him the remark, when he received the freedom of the city of Berlin on September 10th of the same year, that he would not object if after the great events of 1870 and 1871 world-history would for a time, like Joshua's sun, stand still. When, two years later, he sent Prince Hohenlohe to Paris in the place of the rejected Arnim, he still harped on the necessity of letting the sleeping dogs of the East lie. "As to the

Eastern question," Hohenlohe records, "I must always bear in mind that we have no direct interest in it. We could only look on sympathetically, and see that Russia and Austria maintain good relations, and support their mutual interests." An easy saying, for if Governments and nations pursued only mutual interests most of the tasks and anxieties of statecraft in foreign affairs would disappear.

No sooner had the war scare of April, 1875, been dissipated than the Eastern question came to the front in a form that could not be ignored. Spurred into desperation, the hard living people of mountainous Herzegovina rose in revolt in the early summer, and Bosnia soon joined them in sympathy. It was in vain that Bismarck spoke in impatient tones of "petty Herzegovina," and declared that the peace of Europe should not be endangered on its account; in vain also that he warned Gortchakoff of the rashness of reopening a Pandora's casket whose contents it were so much better not to know. If Germany had not been willing to move, Russia would have done so on her own account. Now, however, an event occurred which forced Bismarck's hand against his will. This was the brutal murder by fanatical Mohammedans of the German consul at Salonica, together with his French colleague. The anger which had caused him to call vengeance upon the Carlists for a similar crime only the year before again flared up in him. The German ambassador at the Porte was instructed to demand ample reparation, including the condign punishment of the murderers and of the local officials who could not keep their criminals in check, and a squadron was despatched to Turkish waters in order to insist upon prompt compliance. The Sultan was easily persuaded to put the ringleaders in the Salonica riots to death; less readily he punished and cashiered the lax authorities of the port; but only on direct threat of punitive measures did he agree to pay a suitable money compensation to the relatives of the murdered officials.

Meanwhile, as the revolt threatened to spread until it involved the whole of the Balkan provinces, the Chancellors of the three Empires agreed to address to the Powers which were parties to the last general settlement of Turkish affairs, the Treaty of Paris of 1856, a Note, drawn up by Count Andrassy and dated December 30, 1875, calling on them to join in requiring the Sultan to fulfil his disregarded pledges of better government. The French and Italian Governments at once accepted the proposal. Great Britain stood out for a time, but

eventually came in likewise. Lord Derby, the Foreign Secretary, admitted that interference implied some restriction of the Sultan's independence, but "a Sovereign who can neither keep the peace at home nor pay his debts must expect to submit to some disagreeable consequences." The Sultan excelled himself in masterly inactivity; while readily promising to do everything that was asked of him, in the event he did nothing.

In 1876 the flames of revolt burst out more fiercely, and now Bosnia, Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria all united in a desperate effort to throw off the oppressor's yoke. Once again misrule triumphed; the insurrection was suppressed with a rigorous hand, in Bulgaria in circumstances of special ferocity. It was the atrocities committed by Turkey at this time that drew from Mr. Gladstone some of the most vehement yet warmly human of his political speeches and writings, with the reiteration of an earlier British statesman's wish to see Turkish rule ejected from Europe "bag and baggage."

On the occasion of a visit of passage made by the Czar to Berlin in May the three Chancellors again conferred, and this time adopted a series of proposals known as the Berlin Memorandum. Bismarck was still opposed to armed intervention, and when urged to part Turkey and her rebellious tributaries he declared: "Before they have hacked each other interference will be useless; when one has lost a leg and the other an eye the task will be easier." Constrained at last to assent to active measures, he agreed to endorse any arrangement, not affecting Germany's interests, which might be acceptable to the other Empires, on the clear understanding that if hostilities followed Germany should be allowed to remain passive. The proposals agreed upon were that there should be an armistice for two months, and that meanwhile negotiations should be opened with a view to a settled peace and the introduction in the disturbed territories of serious reforms, to be carried out under the supervision of all the Powers. This time Turkey was not merely to be bidden to reform herself; the work was to be done for her, and if necessary against her will. Submitted to the Western Powers, France and Italy agreed to the Memorandum, but the British Government refused assent.

The second Disraeli administration (February, 1874) had entered its third year, and Disraeli was nearing the summit of his political fame. Under his masterful leadership England was, for good or ill,

reviving in foreign affairs the vigorous traditions of Palmerston and Russell. Born in comparative obscurity, he had compelled the recognition of his talents and genius by hard work and a dominating will which offered defiance to all obstacles, until he saw himself acclaimed as leader by the very political party which at that time represented most rigidly the spirit of caste and social exclusiveness.

A Jew of undiluted blood, this remarkable man typified at once the qualities and the defects of his race. Pre-eminent amongst his characteristics were an outward brilliancy unbalanced by inner depth or by any trace of reverence, a singular agility and subtlety of intellect which made easy sophistry and equivocation, a boundless ambition uncorrected by that instinct of conduct which so strikingly marked his great rival Gladstone, a passion for power unaccompanied by any deep sense of responsibility, a high opinion of success combined with a low opinion of men in general, and an altogether inadequate appreciation of moral values.

An Oriental in every fibre of his being, Disraeli sought to orientalize English political thought. He introduced into controversy a violence and also a flippancy of language which jarred on the feelings of the older generation, accustomed to severer standards of taste; brought a too fertile imagination to the treatment of questions calling for exactitude of statement and calmness of judgment; and exhibited in matters of public principle novel elasticities which shocked old-fashioned politicians, trained in the healthy belief that the rules which govern private should apply also to public dealings, and that any tampering with an ethical code which had given to England her high place amongst the nations was not likely to be an improvement.

Still more this master of political wizardry was bent upon orientalizing British foreign policy, and here his success was greater. A man whose geographical knowledge of the world was, by all accounts, singularly meagre, he yet conceived of a British sway vaster than Cæsar ever knew. It was here that his orientalism was most conspicuously displayed, for the British empire of his ambition was an empire over eastern peoples. Long before this he had spoken (1866) of England as an Asiatic rather than a European Power. For the colonies and colonial politics at that time he cared little.

The British Empire has been ruled by greater statesmen, but no modern Minister succeeded as he did in kindling the imperialistic idea

and in bringing the Empire home to the imagination of Englishmen, though less perhaps – for the time at least – as an object of affection and sober pride than as one of ambition and boastfulness. He had delighted the nation whose love of the bold throw he knew so well, and was only too ready to humour, when in November, 1875, following the prompting of the Foreign Secretary, Lord Derby, he bought the shares of the Khedive of Egypt in the Suez Canal for four million pounds, a transaction which made England almost half-owner of the waterway along which lay the nearest and quickest approach to her Indian Empire. Early in 1876 he startled the country again by making Queen Victoria Empress of India, though to a considerable section of public opinion, even on his own side, the surprise was this time greater than the pleasure.

Most of all Disraeli appealed to British sentiment and prejudice as the interpreter of the traditional suspicion of Russia which the tragic fiasco of the Crimean War had failed to exorcize. After that war, Gortchakoff had said of his country: "La Russie ne boude pas, elle se recueille." A nation which defies the strokes of adversity, and in the time of defeat refuses to paralyse its will by dreams of revenge or to blur its sight by futile passion, but quietly resumes the broken course, is sure to arrive safely at its journey's end sooner or later, by fair ways or other. Russia had been arriving in the East ever since, by slow and unostentatious movements, always consciously directed, always concentrated upon the one unchanging goal.

The certificate which Gortchakoff, in a message to Lord Derby, gave to his own candour, "Je suis comme Adam – tout nu; je ne cache rien," may not always have applied, but it is impossible to doubt his sincerity of purpose in 1876. "Fiat lux!" was his ready rejoinder to Loftus when the ambassador sought his sanction to the publication of a certain despatch in a forthcoming British Blue Book. The Russian Chancellor and still more the Czar honestly wished to see the Sultan coerced in the interest of the Christian populations, and in their concern that the six Great Powers should act together, from a belief that such concerted pressure, and it alone, would achieve that end. Disraeli refused to be convinced, however, to the disappointment of the other Powers. For forty years, and more than ever since the Crimean War, Great Britain had constituted herself the Sultan's special patron, France not unwilling to concede to her the honour and the

onus, and her influence had been pledged to the maintenance of Turkish sovereignty against menace from any side. The cause which now enlisted Russia's sympathies aroused the suspicions of the British Government and its supporters, and it was left to the Opposition and to private citizens to respond to the calls from the East for help in the name of humanity and a common religion. Disraeli's attitude has been variously judged, often harshly, seldom indulgently. Mr. Gladstone, in a fit of righteous indignation, roundly accused his Jewish rival of sheer indifference to the sufferings of Christian populations: more than ever convinced that Disraeli's "crypto-Judaism has had to do with his (Turkish) policy," he wrote: "What he hates is Christian liberty and reconstruction." However that may be, it is certain that Disraeli honestly objected to the partition of the Ottoman Empire, and with it the weakening of what to him was a bulwark against Russian aggression, for it was suspected that by the arrangement proposed in Berlin Bulgaria would come under the direct influence of Russia and Bosnia under that of Austria. He even declared that those who were agitating against the Turk and for his victims were as flagitious as the perpetrators of the Bulgarian atrocities themselves. The weakness of his position – and for it the Foreign Secretary was equally responsible – was that it represented a policy of negation and inaction; for once in her history England left to other countries the championship of the oppressed.

The effect of her refusal to co-operate with the Powers was that the Berlin Memorandum was still-born, and that rebellion and the enormities wreaked upon the insurgent peoples in the name of law and order continued throughout the Balkan territories as before. Poetic justice was satisfied by the fact that the revolutionary fires were kindled in Constantinople itself, and that within several months two Sultans, Abdul Aziz and Abdul Murad V, were dethroned. Under their successor, Abdul Hamid II, the insurrection in Bulgaria was suppressed with a ferocity the like of which had hitherto been unparalleled in modern European annals, and quiet was at last restored – the "quiet of the graveyard."

Almost at any moment during the autumn of 1876 war between England and Russia might have seemed probable. In her attitude England had little sympathy and no support in Europe. Thiers in France feared lest Disraeli's stubbornness and provocation should

“trop tracasser la Russie,” and in Germany a temperate statesman like Hohenlohe warned Sir Robert Morier, for the benefit of his Government, of the danger of England using her favourable position inconsiderately, with the object of humiliating her rival.

The reports of the barbarities committed upon the Bulgarians, which Disraeli first scoffed at as “coffee-house bab ble,” sent a wave of indignation throughout Europe, and the struggles of the oppressed nationalities now excited enthusiasm where such endeavours had usually been regarded with apathy and impatience. England alone held back, for to Disraeli and his followers the abominations of Turkish rule were a lesser evil than Russian aggression. Disraeli knew, as no other man, the weak points in the national character, as Palmerston in his time knew the strong ones. Both men appealed, with equal conviction and equal success, to the empire instincts of the race, but while in addition Palmerston was not above exploiting its magnanimity and humanitarianism in the interest of a foreign policy which was not always virtuous and often was rash and dangerous, Disraeli enlisted in the same service the less noble characteristics of prejudice, suspicion, and credulity. Hence it was that the political catch-cry of the day, “British interests in danger!” rallied to his side all the nervous and inflammable elements in the population. “Now what are those British interests which are so suddenly springing up and producing this alarm?” Gortchakoff later demanded of Lord Augustus Loftus, the British ambassador in St. Petersburg. “Name them to us, and we shall then know what is their nature, their value, and how they can best be safeguarded.” Loftus answered evasively that “Every country must be the judge of its own interests, and must claim to protect them itself,” an answer which, if diplomatic, was not brilliantly so, for it threw no light upon the question at issue.

It was in vain that the Czar had assured the British Government (November 2nd) that he had no idea of acquiring Constantinople, and that all he asked was that it should not fall into the hands of any other Power; that he purposed no encroachment in India; that the famous “Will of Peter the Great,” which was believed to impose upon succeeding. Czars boundless schemes of conquest, did not exist; and that even if, in his resolve to protect the Christians, he entered Turkish territory, he would withdraw as soon as his humane object had been attained. A large part of the nation – and it was not confined to one

party – had allowed itself to be convinced, by the constant iteration of sounding phrases, that Russia was England's irreconcilable enemy, and it honestly believed that her concern for the oppressed Christians was only a pretext for a well-devised policy of aggression by which she was to plant herself on the Bosphorus, destroy the Ottoman Empire, and so menace and ultimately subvert British influence and prestige in the Near East as a preparation for a larger scheme of conquest in Far Asia.

Germany was now wholly on Russia's side. Only a year before Queen Victoria and her Government had arraigned the Chancellor on suspicion of a desire for war with France. Referring to that episode, Lord Odo Russell wrote at the time that, though professing good-will to England, and satisfaction that that country's relationships with Russia were friendly, "behind our backs Bismarck raves like a maniac, and swears he will take his revenge." Now he was able to turn the tables neatly. Not only did the Empress write to the Queen of England, urging her to put restraint upon her bellicose Ministers, but the German ambassador in London, Count Münster, was bidden to use a pacifying influence in the same quarter. Bismarck, owing to ill-health, was living in retirement at the time, and Count Münster received his instructions on the subject direct from the Emperor. With a malicious satisfaction the Minister added the injunction (July 6th) that in offering pacific counsels "you could keep closely to the text of the English circular to us in the spring of 1875." Bismarck was, indeed, bent on two objects – to make Russia's path smooth in the East and to keep her on good terms with Austria. As a realist politician he saw that it was to Germany's interest that Russia should be encouraged to extend her eastern sphere of influence as far as possible, so as to hold England fully occupied in India, for pressure there would always mean relief in Europe.

A threat to Russia, which was not even veiled, was conveyed by Disraeli (now Lord Beaconsfield) at the Lord Mayor's banquet in November. "If," he said, "England were to go to war in a righteous cause, her resources would prove inexhaustible. She is not a country that, when she enters into a campaign, has to ask herself whether she can support a second or a third campaign. If she enters a campaign she will not terminate it until right is done." On the day following this challenge (though not in reply to it, since it had not yet come to his

knowledge) the Czar declared that unless Turkey would cease warring against her subjects and reform herself at the command of the Powers he would compel her on his own ac count. In the meantime the Russian and Austrian Emperors had met at Reichstadt (July, 1876), and there had come to the agreement that the two Empires should for the present refrain from interference, but that in the event of intervention becoming necessary all the Powers should be invited to act together with a view to restricting the area of disturbance. A formal convention followed early in 1877, securing the neutrality of Austria in the event of war between Russia and Turkey, and preparing the way for the reacquisition by Russia of Bessarabia and for the extension of Austrian influence in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Feeling at last that Russia was being pressed unduly by England, Bismarck came forward with an emphatic declaration that Germany would stand by her. Addressing himself to the leaders of the Opposition in the Imperial Diet, who had criticized his attitude as being too subservient to Russia and too little sympathetic to the oppressed Christians, he said (December 5th): “As long as I stand upon this floor they shall not succeed in breaking up our good, intimate, and healthy relations with Russia.” Then followed the memorable words, often to be recalled in later years: “I shall not advise Germany’s active participation in any way so long as there is involved no German interest which would be worth the bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier.”

A conference of the ambassadors of the Powers, called at Constantinople on the proposal of the Czar, sat from the end of December until the end of January, and drew up, for presentation to the Porte, a manifesto containing eleven proposals in the nature of recommendations, but all in vain. All the Powers were now agreed as to what Turkey should do, but they could not induce her to do it. As Lord Salisbury said, the Porte would give promises but no guarantees. So events dragged on, the Powers pressing, the Porte prevaricating, until on April 24, 1877, Russia brought matters to an issue by a formal declaration of war. To the last Gortchakoff had tried to keep the Powers together, and so successfully that their last concerted act was the acceptance of a Russian protocol urging on Turkey, in substance, the demands of the ambassadors’ conference, though with less appearance of pressure. This invitation to listen to reason had been

refused like its predecessors.

It was June before the campaign began in earnest, and for a time it seemed to go in Turkey's favour. Larger numbers and improved generalship told on Russia's side in the end, however, and in spite of several brilliant stands Turkey was beaten after five months of hard fighting. By January, 1878, the Russian army had occupied Adrianople. There was a fear in England that the advance would be pushed as far as Constantinople, and when protests seemed to be ignored Lord Beaconsfield sent a fleet to the Dardanelles and called a large draft of Indian troops to Malta. It was not the fault of the Czar that Constantinople was not occupied, for he had taken the bit into his mouth and against the advice of Gortchakoff had given orders to that effect to the Commander-in-Chief of his forces, the Grand Duke Nicholas, at the very time that a British squadron entered the Dardanelles. Happily for the peace of Europe the orders were not obeyed, the Grand Duke pleading that they arrived too late. A veritable war fever took possession of the anti-Russian part of the British nation, and it was probably the larger part. Seldom had public opinion in England been so hopelessly confused and divided as at that time: on the one hand, there was a widespread abhorrence of Turkish misrule; on the other, an ineradicable suspicion that Russia's aims in championing the oppressed nationalities were only a cloak for a scheme of spoliation. So disunited was even the Liberal party on the subject that when the Prime Minister was on the point of plunging the country into war in the winter of 1877-8 Lord Hartington was prepared to resign the leadership of the parliamentary party rather than oppose him. Nevertheless, Beaconsfield had now no longer a united Cabinet behind him; the Colonial Secretary (Lord Carnarvon) had resigned in January and the Foreign Secretary (Lord Derby) in February, both in protest against his warlike policy. In the meantime Russia had in March concluded with the beaten foe the Treaty of San Stefano, stipulating the conditions of peace and defining the future relations between Turkey and her subject peoples. Submitted to the Powers, England promptly refused assent, and demanded that an agreement which superseded the settlements embodied in the Treaty of Paris of 1856 must be deliberately ratified by all the States which were parties to that treaty, meeting in formal congress. The demand was reasonable, Gortchakoff did not seriously seek to evade it. The

only question now was, How could it be met in a manner at once satisfying to Great Britain yet sufficiently regardful of Russia's *amour-propre?* Would some benevolent Power suggest an acceptable formula? All through the months of April and May the peace-bringing formula was anxiously sought. Bismarck all the time acted as intermediary between the Governments of St. Petersburg and London, honestly endeavouring to facilitate an understanding, and early in June he was able to issue invitations to the Powers for a congress to be held in Berlin. Nevertheless, for some time longer there seemed a possibility that England would enter the war on Turkey's side, and the gravity of the outlook was now brought home to the public mind by persistent rumours of more Cabinet dissensions.

Then occurred one of those surprises that occasionally remind the parliamentary politician, quite as much as the "manin-the-street," how small is his actual share in the government of his country and how little he knows about the questions which he discusses most freely. Suddenly tragedy turned to farce with the disclosure that all the time that the British nation, incited by the Prime Minister, was clamouring for war the hostile Governments, represented by Lord Salisbury and Count Schouvaloff, had been quietly negotiating a secret treaty for the disposal of part of the "Sick Man's" heritage. The motive for the agreement, which was signed on May 30th, was simple enough and not necessarily discreditable. Before Bismarck promised to act on Russia's suggestion and call the Powers together he had wisely insisted upon some general guarantee that such a meeting would achieve a serious purpose. This would only be possible if Russia were prepared to agree in advance upon a modus vivendi with England, her principal opponent. Failing that, he saw that a Congress of the Powers would be little more than a bear-garden, and would probably do more harm than good.

The result of this stipulation of caution was the secret compact which gave rise to so much controversy in England at the time, and which was criticized in unreasonable terms as something intrinsically immoral; whereas its only objectionable feature was the fact that the terms of the treaty were entirely inconsistent with the demand made by Lord Derby, as a condition of British acceptance of a congress, that the negotiations thereat should be subject to no sort of restrictions, and that no arrangement which might have been already agreed upon

should prejudice the full and free discussion of every question involved. By this agreement the two Powers which just before had seemed at daggers drawn agreed upon the main provisions of the Treaty of San Stefano and upon the general attitude which they were to take in the coming congress; the objects of the congress, in fact, were virtually decided before it came together.

European opinion was more justifiably confused by Lord Beaconsfield's denial of the existence of the treaty when as a fact it had been signed, and by the later announcement that Great Britain had also concluded a secret treaty with Turkey (June 4th) under which she undertook to defend the Ottoman Empire in Asia against attack, while the Porte in return agreed to cede to England the island of Cyprus.

The Congress of Berlin met from June 13 to July 12, 1878. Each of the Powers invited, except Turkey, was represented by three plenipotentiaries; the best known of these were Bismarck and Prince Hohenlohe, representing Germany; Lord Beaconsfield, Lord Salisbury, and Lord Odo Russell, representing Great Britain; Prince Gortchakoff and Count Schouvaloff, representing Russia; Counts Andrassy and Karolyi and Baron Haymerlé, who succeeded Andrassy in the following October, representing Austria; M. Waddington, representing France; the Counts Corti and de Launay, representing Italy, and Sadoullah Bey, representing Turkey. Bismarck presided over the Congress, and his personality more than any other dominated it; he might defer now to Russia, now to England, but in the end it was he who struck the balance whenever conflicting claims had to be weighed and decided. Before the Congress met he had stated that it was his intention to act the part of the "honest broker" who had no interests of his own to serve, and he faithfully kept his word.

The resolutions of the Congress were embodied in the Treaty of Berlin of July 13th. Their effect was to introduce a large measure of autonomy in the Balkan territories. Roumania, Serbia, and Montenegro were made independent of Turkey, Montenegro being also given access to the sea; Northern Bulgaria was made an independent principality, and Southern Bulgaria, with the name Eastern Roumania, was given autonomy under a Christian governor; but Macedonia, like Armenia, remained under direct Turkish rule. Greece was promised a rectification of frontier. As to Bulgaria in

particular, it was stipulated that while it was still to be a tributary State, it was, like Roumania and Serbia, to have its own prince, who was to be chosen by the people with the approval of the Powers, but was not to be a member of any of the greater reigning houses of Europe. Altogether, by the operation of the treaty, eleven millions of Christians obtained political liberation.

Few of the Powers which went to Berlin returned emptyhanded. Russia had to forgo some of the spoil upon which she had counted, but she retained the essential gains of her victory. Practically the effect of the treaty was to undo the humiliation inflicted upon her by the Treaty of Paris after the Crimean War. The portion of Bessarabia then taken from her was regained from Roumania, which received part of the Dobrudja in exchange. The Black Sea had already been freed to her ships of war; now she obtained there the port of Batoum, which was to be a free port, and Kars and Ardahan, also in Asia Minor, fell to her. On the other hand, Austria received the right to occupy and administer Bosnia and Herzegovina, but not to annex them outright, though there were plenipotentiaries who believed at the time that this would be the effect. After the meeting of the Congress at which this momentous decision was taken, Count Corti addressed Count Andrassy with, “But, my dear Count, your occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is nothing but annexation badly disguised,” upon which Andrassy replied: “Very badly disguised.” Yet the disguise was not quite thrown off until thirty years later. Austria was also given the right to administer the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar, the neck of land lying between Serbia and Montenegro, and in September of the following year she claimed jurisdiction in this territory, thus obtaining, as Andrassy said, “a broad road into the Balkans.” Judged in the light of later events, the refusal of the Congress to countenance the nascent aspirations of the Slavic peoples in the Balkans after unity seems incomprehensible. It was the absence of any enthusiasm for these aspirations that Mr. Gladstone made a principal reproach against the Government which spoke for Great Britain at the Congress, and led him to say in the House of Commons soon afterwards (July 30th): “I do not mean that the British Government ought to have gone to the Congress determined to insist upon the unqualified prevalence of what I may call British ideas. They were bound to act in consonance with the general ideas of Europe. But within the limits of fair differences of

opinion, which will always be found to exist on such occasions, I do affirm that it was their part to take the side of liberty, and I do also affirm that as a matter of fact they took the side of servitude." Jealousy for the integrity of Turkish rule was still, however, the corner-stone of British policy in the East. "A chain of Slavic States stretching across the peninsula of the Balkans," Lord Salisbury said, "would without doubt be more dangerous to the independence of the Porte than any other combination." Hence it was that Lord Beaconsfield did his utmost to strengthen Austria's position in the Balkans. It was his wish to see her become a sort of warden of the Orient, so imposing an insuperable obstacle against Russian designs upon Constantinople.

For the rest, England's direct gain in the territorial adjustments made at that time was confined to the formal confirmation of her occupation of Cyprus. Italy might probably have had Albania if she had pressed for and been satisfied with it. The year before the Congress, meeting for the first time Signor Crispi, who was already angling for an alliance with Germany, Bismarck had urged him to make sure of that little territory, whereupon Crispi had replied that Italy "would not know what to do with a province on the other side of the Adriatic." Asking now for compensation from Austria, in the form of the Trentino and Istria, she met with a refusal, and in the end received nothing at all. There was no part of the "Sick Man's" European heritage of special interest to France, but from Bismarck and Lord Salisbury she received a hint that Tunis was an eligible prize, and that if she cared to look that way Germany and England would not object. Germany neither obtained nor sought territorial advantage; the "honest broker" was content to take his commission in the form of the moral reward of a good conscience. Not often in his career did Bismarck play a large part so virtuously and so magnanimously as that which he voluntarily assumed at the Berlin Congress.

In diplomatic negotiations wise men, while striving for the best, are usually satisfied with something far short of it, and a bargain must be very bad indeed if it is so admitted. It was a tribute to the general spirit of accommodation which prevailed at Berlin, and above all to the ability and resource of Bismarck, the organizer and manager of the Congress, that if of the Powers represented none went away with full hands so few were sent empty away. Everything that was ceded was at

Turkey's expense, of course, yet even Turkey, assisted by England's influence, fared better than she had hoped. As for the two principal rivals, Alexander II declared in a public manifesto that the treaty had given Russia "all that she wished to attain by force of arms," while Lord Beaconsfield took back to London "peace with honour." On the other hand, Gortchakoff carried away with him from Berlin the feeling that Bismarck had overtrumped him in his own game of diplomacy. Sensitive to a degree where his vanity was concerned, he henceforth harboured a grievance which was personal as well as national. Neither in Russia nor in England was national opinion altogether satisfied with the settlement; while in the former country Germany and Bismarck were accused of proving false friends, in the latter the pro-Turkish enthusiasm had now exhausted itself, and in the succeeding general election Lord Beaconsfield's Eastern policy was strongly repudiated by the nation.

From Germany's standpoint the Treaty of Berlin was undoubtedly a mistake, since it led to that clearer definition of aims and attitudes which had hitherto been avoided by the entente of the three Emperors, and had made their co-operation possible. Russia and Austria entered the Congress as indifferent friends, but they left it as certain rivals for influence in the East, and Germany's task as mediator between them became one of increasing difficulty.

In later years Bismarck gave two versions of the part which he tried to play in that fight of the diplomatic giants at Berlin. We have seen that before the Congress opened he had declared that it was his desire to act the part of the "honest broker," who is concerned to negotiate business on straightforward principles, in such a way that his clients will be satisfied and come to him again. When the Congress was over he protested that he had done his best to hold the balance fairly between the chief contestants – England, as representing Turkey, and Russia, as representing the Balkan territories and herself. Speaking in the Imperial Diet ten years later (February 6, 1888), and in altered circumstances, he changed his ground, and pretended that he had all through acted as Russia's advocate. "During the Congress," he said, "I can candidly say that so far as was possible without prejudice to our own interests or those of our friends (Austria only could have been meant here) I regarded my part as that of a fourth Russian plenipotentiary. Throughout the entire proceedings of the

Congress not a single Russian proposal came to my knowledge which I could not have supported, ay, and carried through."

Bismarck's first judgment upon his efforts was truer and fairer to himself than his second. For he did honestly strive for an equitable settlement. If it proved comparatively easy to make peace between the disputants and to allow Russia to go away convinced that she had gained all that was worth fighting for, the reason was that the issue of the Congress was for practical purposes decided before the delegates met. It is certain also that during the Congress negotiations he formed the opinion that in Beaconsfield he had found his equal, and with the magnanimity of a great man he drew satisfaction from the discovery. It may almost be said that at that time Prince Bismarck and Lord Beaconsfield divided the attention of the Continent. Gortchakoff, long ageing, was overlooked, greatly to his chagrin.

The Turkish Empire had once more been consolidated by a process of excision. Seventy years before (1809) Stratford Canning wrote of Turkey: "Destruction will not come upon this empire either from the North or from the South; it is rotten at the heart; the seat of corruption is in the Government itself." Yet still Ottoman sovereignty and Ottoman misrule continued. Perhaps no patient at any time defied nature, time, and his doctors as bravely as the Sick Man of Europe, who never seemed better and surer of life than after a surgical operation. Nevertheless, the relief from the pressure and worry of the Eastern question which Conservative statesmen in England ardently hoped for was denied them. Baulked for the present in the south-east of Europe, Russia turned her attention with increased eagerness to Far Asia, and there the rivals who had parted sullen and defiant at the gates of Constantinople were destined soon to meet again, still unconciliated. Before that time, however, a new administration had come into power, with the result that Mr. Gladstone, who had so resolutely opposed Lord Beaconsfield's policy, had his turn at the Eastern problem. His Cabinet came in, with Lord Granville at the Foreign Office, in April, 1880, just in time, as Lord Dufferin said, to prevent England from coming into conflict with all the world. The dethroned dictator of the Tory party died in tragic loneliness in April of the following year, never having truly understood England, which he nevertheless served devotedly according to his lights, and regarded to the last by most Englishmen as a baffling enigma, a man of wonder

and mystery, brilliant but impenetrable, and alien to them in thought, feeling, and character – like an orchid amongst the roses of their gardens, a gorgeous exotic. With his death the party of militant imperialism suffered a temporary eclipse.

An agreement over Turkey having been arrived at, Bismarck was determined that, as far as his influence went, it should be final. All his efforts, therefore, were directed towards securing compliance with the treaty of 1878, and preventing any reopening of the Eastern question. He said at that time (December 5, 1879) that he was not prepared to sacrifice "the sound bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier" for the sake of the Balkan wranglings. Soon he had an opportunity for the exercise both of pressure and restraint. In constituting Montenegro an independent principality the treaty gave to it new and enlarged frontiers. Further, by its 13th protocol the Congress also "invited" Turkey – whose plenipotentiaries assented – to rectify the frontiers of Thessaly and Epirus in favour of Greece, and article 24 of the treaty provided that in the event of the Porte and Greece failing to come to an understanding on the subject the Powers should offer their mediation. In neither case did the Porte show any disposition to respect its obligations, the one legal and the other moral, and after waiting for nearly two years the States whose expectations were thus thwarted decided to take the matter into their own hands and seek to obtain by force the rights which were not to be gained by peaceable means.

With a view to the adjustment of Montenegro's claims England proposed a conference, to be held in Berlin, and the other Powers agreeing, it was duly called from London and met in June, 1880. The arrangement proposed was the cession to Montenegro of the port of Dulcigno and part of the adjacent coast. To this Turkey objected, and it was only after a demonstration before Dulcigno made by a united fleet, to which all the signatory Powers contributed, and further protracted parleying, that she yielded. In this naval demonstration Germany joined unwillingly, and only on the understanding that no shot should be fired and no troops be landed from the German vessels. Germany was also the first Power to call off her ships and order them to leave Turkish waters. The claims of Greece were settled in the following year, after renewed threats of hostilities and a further conference, this time held in Constantinople, in which Bismarck

successfully played the part of conciliator, and thereby won Turkey's lasting gratitude.

Hitherto the interest of Germany in the Eastern question and in the controversies over this question which divided the other Powers had been indirect and derivative, but the Berlin Congress incidentally marked the opening of a new era in the relationships of that country with the Turkish Empire. There her attitude as the passive onlooker changed to that of the sympathetic adviser, and gradually Berlin began to cultivate ties of close friendship with the ostracized Government of the Porte. Russia wanted territory, England influence, but Germany was satisfied to begin that policy of peaceful penetration which served her so well in later years both there and in more distant parts of the world. At the Sultan's request a German military mission was sent to Turkey in 1882, and her army was reorganized on German principles by General von der Goltz and Rustow Pasha, while many Turkish officer's entered the German army. German officials were also lent to Turkey for the reform of her administration and finance. Where the diplomat, the soldier, and the bureaucrat went, the trader was not slow to follow. Manufacturers, bankers, engineers, and merchants invaded the hitherto neglected country and its Asiatic possessions – wherever, in fact, there seemed promise of reward to energy and enterprise – and the foundations were thus laid of the later economic conquest of Turkey which proved so sore a grievance to the displanted nations.

Although Bismarck could fairly claim that he had rendered to Russia reasonable service at the Berlin Congress, the Czar's professed satisfaction was not of long duration. Signs of irritation were shown when in 1879 Bismarck was slow to give to Russia the support she expected in connection with the measures necessary to the execution of the decisions of the Powers. Speaking later of the friction thus caused, Bismarck said that the opinion seemed to prevail in St. Petersburg that in all these measures it was Germany's duty to fall in with the Russian demands without counting the cost to her other friendships. Such a one-sided arrangement was totally opposed to his principle of Do ut des, and this he told Gortchakoff and, through him, the Czar. This hesitation to do Russia's bidding brought the Emperor William a pointed letter from the Czar in which occurred the words, "Your Majesty's Chancellor has forgotten the promises of 1870″ – a

reference to the effusive greeting sent to St. Petersburg from Versailles on the conclusion of the Preliminaries of Peace with France. Bismarck even spoke of the "written threats" which were received in Berlin from the same quarter at this time. Coolness was only prevented from developing into misunderstanding when the Emperor paid a visit of conciliation – a sort of Canossa pilgrimage – to his imperial nephew at Alexandrovno on September 3rd. The visit was made on the advice of Field-Marshal Manteuffel and against that of the Chancellor, who was of opinion that the debt to Russia had been liquidated.

Later, Bismarck spoke of these incidents as affording a "lightning-like illumination of a situation which in recent years I had often been compelled to anticipate." The reminder of how unsubstantial were the foundations upon which the friendship with Russia rested was one of the bitterest disappointments of his official life. He had honestly done his best to strengthen the fabric of amity, as he believed with success. On Gortchakoff's good-will he had long ago ceased to count, and foreseeing the old Chancellor's early retirement, he had cultivated confidences with other Russian statesmen. One of his new friends was Count Schouvaloff, Gortchakoff's colleague at the Berlin Congress, who had returned his advances with the enthusiasm of a novice in great affairs. How heavily the thought of a possible rupture of cordial ties weighed upon him appears from a letter which he wrote to Count Schouvaloff on February 15, 1877. In this he spoke of the Russo-German friendship as "a work that will perhaps be easier to destroy than it was to create, especially if it happens that my successors do not show the same patience as I in cultivating traditions the experience of which they lack. . . . It will perhaps be easier to lead astray the Chancellors who will come after me by giving them a glimpse of the facility with which on your part a coalition could be built upon a basis of revenge. The calmness with which I regard this eventuality I shall not be able to bequeath to my successors."

During the Congress the correspondents had repeatedly discussed the relations between the two countries. To Count Schouvaloff's remark, "Vous avez le cauchemar des coalitions," Bismarck had assented, whereupon the younger man asked why Germany and Russia should not conclude a defensive and offensive alliance, so providing against any possible combination dangerous to either of them. Bismarck's chief objection was that while on the German side

such an alliance would carry the entire sympathy and support of the reigning house and Government, it would rest in Russia solely on the good-will of the Czar personally, and that, his good-will withdrawn, no guarantee of its security would remain. From the standpoint of material force he even yet held an alliance with Russia to be preferable to one with Austria – and no third Power came into consideration – provided only that it offered equal promise of permanence.

It is probable that Bismarck's mind had dwelt on the idea of a more intimate advance to Austria ever since Gortchakoff had submitted him to humiliation in 1875. Disappointment at seeing his efforts at the Berlin Congress so ill requited by the Czar whom he had done his best to serve gave the final turn to his decision. One of the most momentous resolutions of his life was taken when he decided that the time had come to make the great choice, so long deferred, between Germany's Southern and Eastern neighbours. It was the choice between a complete alliance and an equivocal relationship which checked cordial advances on all sides, yet in now declaring for Austria wholly and solely he was fully conscious of the great risks involved. Nor did he forget that he was reversing Prussia's traditional policy as established by Frederick the Great, who in his *Exposé du gouvernement Prussien* laid down the maxim, "One of the first political principles is to endeavour to become an ally of the one neighbour who may become most dangerous to the State. For that reason we have an alliance with Russia, and thus we have our back free as long as it lasts."

That Austria was ready for a closer relationship had been shown in the year of the Congress by her willing acceptance of a treaty, concluded on October 11th and published the following February, by which article 5 of the Treaty of Prague was revoked without conditions. This article stipulated that the population of the northern districts of Schleswig should revert to Denmark if by free vote it expressed a wish to that effect. Bismarck had taken no steps to give effect to this provision, and may never have intended to do so. Now Austria agreed to its repeal as an act of friendship and a token of a "desire to draw closer the friendly tie between the two Powers." The treaty chiefly interested Denmark and the Danes who were no longer to have the hope of reunion with the mother country, but to Russia it

was an unwelcome indication that the temperature of the Austro-German *entente* was rising.

Just before the Emperor William met the Czar at Alexandrovno Bismarck had met Count Andrassy at Gastein (August 27th and 28th) and discussed with him the conclusion of an Austro-German defensive alliance. Prince Hohenlohe had also been summoned there for a conference on "grave matters," and he relates that when Andrassy heard of the project he "jumped right up to the ceiling with joy." Hohenlohe at first disapproved, not entirely trusting Austria, nor convinced that Russia was seriously hostile, and apprehensive that an alliance with Austria would result in one between Russia and France, which was, in fact, the sequel. Bismarck argued that Austria could not remain isolated in face of "the menace of Russia." She would sooner or later look about for an ally, and if that ally were Russia or France, Germany would be exposed to the danger of isolation. He knew that if Russia and Austria ever came to blows Germany would be unable to remain neutral, since interest would require her to take the Austrian side. Were Austria vanquished, or even weakened, Russia would become a deadly menace to Germany; on the other hand, with Austria protected and preserved, Russia could be held in check. Moreover, the Czar's unexpected outburst had convinced him that Germany was depending upon a support which might fail her in any critical moment, and hence that it would be folly to neglect precautions. "If one," he said to Hohenlohe, "had to go through a wood with a dear friend who had suddenly exhibited signs of madness, it would be well to put a revolver in one's pocket, but one might be very friendly all the same." Hohenlohe needed no more convincing, and the conferences left the treaty-makers of one mind.

Up to this point Bismarck had not breathed a word to the Emperor about the intended and virtually concluded alliance. He knew that the proposal would mean a severe struggle in that quarter, and with that prospect in view he fortified himself by taking into his confidence the King of Bavaria. In a long letter written from Gastein he pictured to that monarch the political situation which Germany had now to face, and developed the argument for the proposed compact, receiving in reply a gratifying assurance of complete sympathy and approval.

The task of persuading the Emperor, now at Baden-Baden, proved even more difficult than had been expected. Fresh from a friendly

meeting with his nephew and M. Giers, the proposal to desert Russia suggested to his straightforward mind duplicity and deceit, and at first he refused point-blank to discuss it. Bombarded by letter after letter, he still remained unconvinced; all his Chancellor's appeals on the ground of political necessity were unavailing against the call of personal loyalty. To Andrassy, Bismarck wrote from Gastein on September 3rd that, although he had supported his proposal by an explanatory memorandum of sixty folio pages, "in spite of all my care I have not succeeded in completely obviating the misunderstanding that there must be some idea of an aggressive tendency behind our peaceful plan. This idea is, of course, very uncongenial to an old man of over eighty-two years, but I hope to be able to remove it completely, even if it should cost me a fairly long postscript to the said sixty pages."

From Gastein Bismarck had gone to Vienna, greeted everywhere on the way by popular ovations, which in the capital reached a torrid heat. There he had the satisfaction of receiving the assurance of Francis Joseph that the alliance was altogether welcome to him. Thus encouraged, he now resorted to a device too hazardous to be employed save on the most critical occasions. First winning over his colleagues in the Government, he made the question one of confidence, and presented to the Emperor an ultimatum in the words – acquiescence or resignations all round. Already he had told Hohenlohe that for himself it would be the treaty or retirement into private life. Then the Emperor surrendered, though even now, as Bismarck records, only because he was averse to Ministerial changes and not because he had been convinced by arguments of policy. Hohenlohe relates that the Emperor at the time confessed to him his suspicions that Bismarck was endeavouring to unite Germany, Austria, France, and Great Britain in a coalition against Russia.

Drawn up in Vienna in September, the German-Austrian treaty of alliance was formally concluded on October 7th, though its terms were only made known to the world in February, 1888. The preamble declared that "cordial co-operation between Germany and Austria-Hungary can menace no one, but is calculated to strengthen the European peace created by the Treaty of Berlin," and affirmed the promise of the two Sovereigns "never to give to their purely defensive agreement an aggressive tendency in any direction." The allies

undertook to support each other with their entire military resources in the event of attack on either by Russia, and only to conclude peace jointly and in agreement, and in the event of either of them being attacked by another Power (France being here meant) the other promised to preserve an attitude of benevolent neutrality towards its ally. Should such second Power, however, be supported by Russia, the allies would make common cause as in the first case. It was characteristic of the mentality of the two men that while the Emperor insisted that the Czar should be informed confidentially that an attack made by him upon either Germany or Austria would be repelled by both, Bismarck deemed such frankness unnecessary.

German opinion was on the whole cordially favourable to the new alliance, the Conservatives because of their traditional leanings to Austria, though they more than any other party regretted that a choice had been necessary; the Ultramontanes from natural sympathy with a Power predominantly Roman Catholic and now the mainstay of the Papacy; the Liberal groups because, though political conditions were as backward in Austria as in Germany herself, they were still more backward in Russia. In England the alliance was equally well received, though there interested motives came into play. Lord Salisbury, regarding a strong and secure Austria as the best guarantee of "the peace of Europe and the independence of nations," welcomed the first news of the conclusion of the treaty as "good tidings of great joy."

Bismarck had lamented, "If only Russia would not compel us to choose between her and Austria!" If a choice was necessary at all, it cannot be doubted that, from Germany's standpoint at that time it was wisely made, and, indeed, that the alternative was impossible. An alliance with Russia would have been, alike as to the risks to be covered and the responsibilities to be incurred by the two Powers, an alliance on unequal terms. If far stronger than Austria as an ally, Russia would have been immeasurably less safe and reliable, and every advantage to be gained from union with her would have been neutralized by equal or greater disadvantages. Worst of all, such an alliance would have left Russia free to extend her policy of aggression from the Near to the Far East, and so to involve Germany, indirectly and perhaps in the end directly, in complications in which she had no conceivable interest.

The effect of the Vienna treaty was that henceforth Germany gave

to Russia a finger only, but to Austria her whole hand; yet though there could no longer be the old intimate cordiality, there was no suggestion of a breach between Berlin and St. Petersburg. Nothing was further from Bismarck's mind than the idea of "cutting the wire to St. Petersburg." The Emperor William had also come to attach an almost superstitious importance to the triple *entente* as the only reliable safeguard against the democratic movements which were making headway in Western Europe. His idea was that the three Empires should form a new Holy Alliance against democracy, for with increasing years his deeply-rooted prejudices against Liberalism in any form and his reluctance to make any concession to popular ideas, an attitude assiduously fostered by his Chancellor, had been strengthened to the point of obstinacy. He admitted to Hohenlohe his genuine fear that the franchise legislation proposed in England a little later might be the signal for a general wave of republicanism.

It would have been unlike Bismarck had he failed to use a change in the international outlook for political purposes. In February, 1880, there appeared in the *North German Gazette* an article representing the attitude of Russia and France as aggressive and menacing, and German public opinion – the most nervous and highly-strung in Europe – was thrown into panic. Hohenlohe relates how on the 22nd he looked in at the Diet and was impressed by the alarm of the politicians there. "Afterwards," he adds, "I learned at the Chancellor's that he had only written the article to produce an effect on the deputies, so that they might vote for the Army Bill. He laughed when I told him of the result."

Three years after the conclusion of the Treaty of Vienna, Italy joined hands with the two Empires, and the Triple Alliance was formed which was to last for over thirty years. In thus extending the basis of Germany's security Bismarck showed again, as in 1872, a preference for that system of *"accord à trois"* which he regarded as the only safe form of insurance in Continental dealings. The *entente* of the three Emperors which Italy joined in 1874 was at most a diplomatic arrangement intended to ensure unity of action between the associated Powers in matters of common interest. Bismarck drew closer the ties between the Courts of Berlin and Rome when in October of the following year he induced William I to visit Victor Emmanuel in Milan (following a visit by the Austrian Emperor to

Venice in the preceding April), where he was rewarded by a reception impressive in its cordiality. "Our meeting," the Emperor telegraphed to the King from Bozen on regaining German soil, "was an event of historical importance, for we have both been called by Providence to the heads of nations which have won their unity after long struggle." The friendship thus strengthened, though recorded in no written agreement, continued unimpaired until Victor Emmanuel's death (January 9, 1878).

Italy's decision to join the alliance was at last precipitated by the French appropriation (May, 1881) of Tunis, a territory which she had regarded as historically coming within her special sphere of influence. Little did the Italian Government divine that just before Bismarck had told General Pittié, chief of the French President's Military Cabinet, that "the French were to go ahead in Tunis and not to trouble about the Italians." The decisive step was taken by the Ministry of Signor Depretis in May, 1882, though it was only announced in the following year. Signor Crispi, then a private deputy, assailed Depretis at the time with the reproach, "You have made yourself Germany's *gendarme!"* Several years later he became a Minister, and after he had met Bismarck at Friedrichsruh (September, 1887) there was no more ardent adherent of the Triple Alliance than he. Italy became a member of the Alliance in virtue of a treaty containing stipulations which bound her and Austria to maintain the *status quo* in the East of Europe and in no case to propose any change there without previous agreement. The treaty was concluded for a first term of five years. A year later Austria concluded with Roumania, a kingdom since 1881, a treaty of alliance providing for reciprocal help in the event of unprovoked attack. Later both Germany and Italy accepted this treaty, which for Austria was in effect one of reinsurance against Russia.

Bismarck's cup of elation was filling, but not full. He had made Moab his washpot, and over Edom he had cast out his shoe; it remained to be seen whether his diplomacy would prove equal to the task of still holding Russian Philistia by chains of interest, if not of affection. For though Germany's relations with Russia continued to be cordial, he saw clearly the danger of a breach with her, and it became now his foremost object to prevent such a disaster, or at least to postpone it as long as possible. Germany henceforth lived, as it were, beneath an avalanche, which might be held back for five years or fifty,

but was one day sure to fall. Diplomatic safeguards were therefore supplemented by measures of military and naval defence. Extensive works were undertaken for the protection of the Baltic coast and the eastern frontier districts; seaports were fortified and strategical railways built; larger garrisons were set up on the eastern marshes, and the navy was strengthened, not as yet against England.

For a time the tendency to alienation had been checked by a change in the Russian Chancellorship. Gortchakoff was over eighty years old, and his capacity for good work, though not his confidence in himself, had long been exhausted. Towards the end he had held the name of office without its full responsibilities. In 1876, on the occasion of the meeting of the Czar and the Austrian Emperor at Reichstadt, he had anticipated his retirement, and with characteristic vanity had declared that his reputation required that he should disappear with grace and dignity: “je ne veux pas m’éteindre comme une lampe qui file,” he said, “je veux me coucher comme un astre.” The formal close of his Ministerial career was to come only with his death, but upon the stage which had witnessed so many of his diplomatic successes during the larger part of a quarter century an understudy had already appeared in the person of M. de Giers, and under the Czar it was he rather than Gortchakoff who now determined Russia’s attitude to the neighbouring empire. An exchange of letters between the two Sovereigns when in February, 1880, the Czar celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of his reign, and again on the Ger man Emperor’s eighty-third birthday in the following month, seemed to recall the ardours of 1870.

A year later (March 13, 1881) Alexander II fell to the blow of the assassins who had shadowed him for years, and had already made five organized attempts upon his life. Gortchakoff also died in the same month, full of years and honour. In a letter addressed to the Russian diplomatic representatives abroad, notifying the new reign, M. de Giers gave the quieting assurance, “Russia has attained her full development. Feelings of envy and discontent are far removed from her. All she desires is to assure her position, to protect herself abroad, and to develop her powers, wealth, and welfare. The foreign policy of the Emperor will be altogether pacific. Russia will remain true to her friends, she will maintain unchanged her traditional sympathies, yet at the same time reciprocate the friendly attitude of all States.” The

German Crown Prince attended the funeral of the murdered Czar, and in the following September the Emperor, accompanied by the Crown Prince and Bismarck, journeyed to Danzig to meet Alexander III, with whom were his brothers, the Grand Dukes Vladimir and Alexei, and M. de Giers. All these exchanges of courtesies, conferences, and ratifications of friendship were reported to be as successful as the proverbial surgeons' operations; but they did not answer the question, What would happen when the reaction came?

When the reciprocal felicitations of the Emperors were over, their Chancellors took up the tale. At the end of 1883 Giers visited Bismarck at Varzin, and a year later he was at Friedrichsruh. It seemed as though Gortchakoff's influence had been altogether repudiated, and the two Governments were about to revive the cordiality of long-past days. There was one portent which boded no good, however, and it was the fact that the feeling of the Russian people in general continued distinctly hostile to Germany. At the very time that the Sovereigns and their chief Ministers seemed in full accord the Pan- Slavist leaders and Press in St. Petersburg were carrying on a bitter agitation against the neighbouring empires and nations. In January, 1882, General Skobeleff, who had proved himself a brilliant general in the war with Turkey made a vehement attack first upon Austria and then upon Germany, for whose scientifically trained army, he said, that of Russia would at any time prove a match. The irate soldier was given a period of enforced leisure as a punishment for his indiscretion, whereupon he went to Paris and there repeated his offence in an acuter form. Depreciation and defiance of Germany was as music in French ears, and coming from Russia it was doubly welcome.

At this time there were signs of an unmistakable advance in the relations between Russia and France. The action taken by the Czar and his Chancellor at the time of the war scare of 1875 showed that Russia's political engagements towards the neighbouring empires had not weakened her sympathy for France, to whose culture she owed so much. In France, too, there were many statesmen, like Thiers, who held that French interests pointed to the wisdom of an alliance with the Eastern empire which had lately served her so well, and who believed that Germany's ascendant position in Europe would sooner or later lead to a new grouping of the Powers.

Before the Triple Alliance was two years old Bismarck's fear of Germany's isolation had given place to a worse fear of what would happen if Russia were left in the same undesirable position. It was his brooding over the possibilities of his own diplomacy which led him in September, 1884, to conclude a supplementary treaty with Russia behind the back of Germany's allies. In that month, at William I's suggestion, all the three Emperors met at Skiernievice, Bismarck, Giers, and Kalnoky being present, to confer upon what to him appeared an alarming spread of democratic ideas in Western Europe. Early in the year Bismarck had drawn up a memorandum on the subject for the Emperor's consideration, and it was not difficult to convince him that the true way of safety lay in the cordial cooperation of the Empires as representing the monarchical principle in its least attenuated form. The result of the meeting was an agreement by which the Emperors entered into a sort of Holy Alliance which was to do for monarchy what its prototype of 1815 was intended to do for religion and the peace of Europe.

A second and far more important secret agreement, however, resulted from the Skiernievice meeting. It was a defensive treaty between Germany and Russia, on the lines of the Austro- German treaty of 1879, by which each Power undertook to pre serve an attitude of "benevolent neutrality" in the event of the other being attacked. If not notified to the Austrian and Italian Governments, the treaty soon came to their knowledge, though the world at large remained in the dark until Bismarck himself made it public in 1896. This reinsurance policy, which seemed to ensure for Germany, in so far as treaty engagements could do it, a favourable position in any contingency humanly conceivable, was concluded first for six years. In his eagerness to retain the friendship of Russia, Bismarck was willing at that time to strain Germany's liabilities towards Austria to the utmost, not always to the satisfaction of that Power. "A war with Russia in which we had to side with Austria," he said to Hohenlohe, "would be a misfortune for us, for we could gain nothing – not even our expenses." The full significance of the treaty was to come to light only a few years later. The alliance with Austria was barely five years old, yet its author already seemed doubtful both of its wisdom and its permanence.

It cannot be doubted that Russia interpreted the secret treaty of

1884 as giving her a free hand, so far as German influence went, not only in the Near but the Far East, and that Bismarck, at least for a time, tolerated, even if he did not encourage, that view. Long before this he had ceased to be disturbed by the prospect of Russia established on the Bosphorus. To the Russian diplomatist M. Sabouroff he boasted that he was the first of European statesmen "to break with the old tradition, with which the Westerners inoculated all the Cabinets, that Constantinople in the hands of Russia would be a danger to Europe. I consider that idea false, and I do not see why an English interest ought to become a European interest." When in September, 1886, the Crown Prince ventured to suggest to him that the Balkan States should combine against Russia, he disagreed and said that he would prefer to see Russia take Constantinople, and the Balkan peninsula as well, "for then she would be weakened."

There was a special reason for Bismarck's indisposition to ease Great Britain's relations with Russia at that time, for in the colonial enterprises upon which he had just entered he was finding his progress obstructed at every turn by British claims and objections. Hence when the rival Asiatic Powers again came into collision he was content for some time to let matters take their course. Persistent Russian aggression had brought the dominions of the Czar and the Empress-Queen into perilous neighbourhood: for only Afghanistan now divided them, and even this neutral territory was a source of contention. Lord Granville had declared long before that while he could conceive of the Russians "pining for Constantinople," he could not understand "why they should push on to the extreme East." During his tenure of the Foreign Office he had shown every desire to be friendly and accommodating to Russia – some critics even said that he went too far in that direction – yet he had failed to check her forward march towards a goal which had never been satisfactorily defined, and which, for that reason, was assumed to be India. Early in 1884 Russian troops occupied Merv, though only two years before the St. Petersburg Government had disclaimed the bare idea of approaching it. Would Herat be the next objective, first to be disclaimed and then appropriated?

For England it had now become a question of "Thus far and no farther." As early as 1867 Lord Clarendon had suggested to Gortchakoff that the two countries should agree to observe a neutral

zone in the Far East – the original of the "buffer State" – and Russia appeared to favour the idea. Assuring Clarendon that the Czar regarded Afghanistan as "completely outside the sphere within which Russia may be called upon to exercise her influence," the Russian Chancellor a little later proposed that that State should so serve, subject to England acting as pledge for the Ameer's friendly attitude. Upon this condition the proposal was at the time wrecked. Now it was renewed with greater seriousness. But first it was necessary to fix upon the "scientific frontier" of which Disraeli (as Lord Beaconsfield) had preached the need after 1878, and over this question much valuable time was lost at a juncture when delay was fraught with danger to peace.

A frontier commission had been agreed upon, but for months the British members waited in vain for their Russian colleagues, and there seemed ground for the suspicion that there was a desire in that quarter to obstruct this sensible settlement. In any negotiations capable of taking a serious turn Russia was at an advantage at the time, and she knew it. "If the Russians mean to advance on the Afghan frontier," wrote Lord Derby to Lord Granville on January 5, 1885, "now is their time, while we have Egypt on our hands and an army locked up in Africa." For a time forces of Russians and Afghans confronted each other in defiant restraint, as though ready to fly at each other's throats, and waiting only for the signal. On March 29th there was a slight collision, which happily led to no worse mischief, yet the war clouds still hung over the East, and a month later Mr. Gladstone asked the House of Commons for an emergency credit for eleven million pounds, and promptly received it, while a British fleet occupied Port Hamilton, off the Korea. Then peaceful counsels had their way, and the danger passed over. The frontier commissioners got to work, and the boundaries were fixed, Russia being awarded Pendjeh and Afghanistan the Zulfikar Pass. With the ratification of the agreement the relations between Russia and England passed into a new and more hopeful phase. Bismarck received the credit – and probably deserved it – of having encouraged Russia to resistance until war was probable, and only then of having used his influence in favour of conciliation. The secret treaty of the previous year was sufficient to explain his concern that the dispute should not end in hostilities. Now, as always, he was concerned to prevent the Oriental

pot from boiling over.

His determination that questions in which Russia was concerned should not prove a source of friction nearer home was shown by his refusal to be involved in the affairs of Bulgaria during the first years of her troubles as an infant principality. Bulgaria had played an important part in the deliberations of the Congress of Berlin, and the first twenty-two articles of the Treaty of Berlin dealt exclusively with her future organization and government. One of these articles expressly placed the new principality under a Russian commissioner, supported by a Russian army of occupation, until its permanent government should have been organized. Prince Alexander of Battenberg was elected Prince of Bulgaria on April 29, 1879, and the election was duly confirmed by the Powers. Established in his little realm, the ruler found himself surrounded by Russian generals, officers, and Ministers, an arrangement which lasted for several years. All this time there was growing in the two halves of the old kingdom an agitation for reunion, and Russia seemed to favour the idea. Then in September, 1883, the Prince suddenly dismissed his foreign Ministers, on the suspicion of plotting to depose him and place the country under a direct Russian protectorate, though the military advisers still remained.

Two years later the Greater Bulgarian movement in Eastern Roumelia culminated in the capture of the Turkish pasha who represented the sovereignty of the Porte and an invitation to Prince Alexander to assume full sovereignty. The Prince accepted the invitation, which appears to have been endorsed both by the Christian and Mohammedan populations. Turkey protested against the act; the Powers also condemned it as an infraction of treaties, and solemnly warned the disturbers of the peace that they would be held responsible for the consequences, but did no more. Germany in particular refused to move in the matter, fearing to bring Russia and Austria into open antagonism. Battenberg, who had proved himself a capable administrator and a man of courage, thereupon entered upon his enlarged sovereignty, and Europe settled down as if nothing had happened.

All might have gone well with Bulgaria under the reunion had the people and their ruler been willing to place themselves under Russian protection more than in the past, but this they were not disposed to

do. In September all the Russian officers in the Bulgarian army resigned by order of the Czar, and in November Serbia, incited by Russia, declared war upon the sister principality, only to be signally defeated within a fortnight. Prince Alexander led the Bulgarian army and achieved feats of arms which excited general admiration, and nowhere more heartily than in his native Germany, where a princess of the imperial house was willing to share his throne, and take the risk of its stability. After peace had been concluded in the following February, the Porte formally acknowledged the Prince as Governor of Eastern Roumelia. Then were illustrated anew the insecurity and lawlessness which had been engendered in territories long ruled by force and fraud. In August Prince Alexander was kidnapped in his palace by a band of rebel officers, compelled, under threat of death, to abdicate, and carried away to Rahowa, on the Danube, and thence shipped to Keni Russi, in Bessarabia. Set free on Russian soil, he returned to Germany, whence he telegraphed to the Czar: "Since Russia gave to me my crown, I am prepared to renounce it into the hands of Russia's ruler." The Czar's answer came promptly, warning the Prince against returning to Bulgaria on pain of his patron's displeasure. Nevertheless, he returned to Philippopolis at the beginning of September and was enthusiastically welcomed by the population. His position at Sofia, however, had been compromised by his recognition of Russia instead of Turkey as the suzerain of the principality, and several days later he formally abdicated and left the country for the last time.

From first to last Bismarck had refused to allow Germany to interfere in the Bulgarian embroglio, and his action was much criticized at home, as lacking the firmness and decision which had invariably marked his foreign policy. Again, as in 1864, the democratic parties – this time aided by the Clericals – would have driven him into war against his will had that been possible. Yet his action, if not heroic, was perfectly consistent. He was still as determined as ever to prevent a breach between Russia and Austria, and faced by a risk so serious he declined to move. Addressing the Opposition benches, he roundly asserted that the real disturbers of the peace of Europe were the Radical and Clerical newspapers of Berlin, which were inciting Germany to provocative acts against Russia, regardless of the Treaty of Berlin, and reproaching him with

cowardice and indifference to German prestige simply because he would not go to war for "the *beaux yeux* of Prince Alexander."

"Are these incitements to war or are they not?" he asked in the Diet, after reading (January 13, 1887) a choice selection of newspaper extracts breathing out fire and slaughter. "Can it be concluded that the 'statesmen' who are behind these articles entertained the wish to embroil us in a war with Russia?" Yet the politicians who were now working such mischief were the same who had refused the Military Septennate Law just before! " Bulgaria, the little country between the Danube and Balkan," he said later (February 6th), "is not an object of such impressive importance that it should be made the occasion for plunging Europe, from Moscow to the Pyrenees and from the North Sea to Palermo, into a war the result of which no one would be able to foresee, and at the end of which it would be impossible to say why it had been waged at all." It was solely owing to Bismarck's restraining influence at that time that Austria, loyally accepting, in spirit as well as in letter, the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin which gave to Russia a predominant influence in Bulgaria, supported, or at least did not oppose, the Russian attitude on the Bulgarian question.

After a stormy *interregnum,* during which many rival candidates for the vacant throne were put forward or offered themselves, the national Sobranje in July, 1887, ignoring Russia's favourite, elected Prince Ferdinand of Coburg, who accepted the invitation against the protests of Turkey and the Powers. Fortune favoured him, however, and he maintained his ground; the time came when he even made peace with the Czar on condition of a revival of Russian influence in the principality.

As time passed it became increasingly obvious that the relations between Germany and Russia could not remain as they were before 1879, and that the reinsurance treaty of 1884 was, from the standpoint of both countries, an inconclusive compromise. Germany could not now desert Austria, while Russia could not indefinitely remain without an ally of her own. The later formal estrangement, leading to a new and ominous grouping of the Great Powers, did not come, indeed, in Bismarck's time, but the conditions which made it inevitable were already in existence. In 1887 France supplied half a million rifles to Russia on the condition that they should never be used against Frenchmen. In the following year the first Russian loan

was placed on the French market.

From Turkey in Europe it is now necessary to turn to the relations of the European Powers to another part of the Ottoman Empire, the land of the Pharaohs and the fellaheen. In the developments which the internal affairs of Egypt have undergone Germany has taken little direct, though an important indirect, part. That is to say, although the Egyptian question has never possessed for Germany the importance, either politically or commercially, which it has had for Great Britain and France, it has constantly proved a convenient occasion for political negotiations and bargaining over other matters in which she was more immediately concerned. In its modern aspects the Egyptian question may for convenience be dated from the coup *d'état* of the Khedive Ismail Pasha in 1879. Embarrassed by debts, due to wasteful public expenditure and personal extravagance, and unable to contract new loans, the spendthrift Ismail in April of that year decided that the only hope of evading his difficulties and beginning again lay in the violent rupture of all financial restraints. Accordingly, he dismissed his European Ministers and the advisers who had been deputed by the Powers to reorganize Egyptian finance, and proposed to liquidate his debts upon a scheme of his own, in which no one save himself had any confidence, and which, if put into execution, would have made the financial position of the country and the prospects of its creditors still more desperate.

Such a course of illegality and anarchy as the Khedive had chosen to adopt could not be passively tolerated by the Powers, and least of all by France and Great Britain, whose interests in Egypt were greater than those of the rest, and whose influence and prestige were specially involved in the maintenance of the financial administration which they had but recently organized. Nevertheless, it was Germany, who had less at stake in Egypt than any of the other Powers, who first protested against Ismail's acts of folly and turpitude. Two years before, when the Khedive was setting at defiance judgments of the law courts obtained by his creditors, the German Government had similarly protested, and had proposed to Lord Derby, Foreign Secretary in Disraeli's Cabinet, that the Powers should jointly bring pressure to bear upon him, "if only to avoid the possibility of separate action on the part of some of them."

The Khedive had notified his repudiation of the existing

arrangements in a Decree of April 22nd. Germany waited in vain until May 18th for the other Powers to move, and then through her Consul-General in Cairo served on the Khedive a formal protest, declaring that "the Imperial Government sees in the Decree of April 22nd, by which the regulation of the debt is to be determined by the Egyptian Government alone, and existing recognized rights are to be abolished, an open and direct violation of the international obligations contracted with the judicial reforms; it declares the Decree to be without legally binding effect upon the competency of the Mixed Courts and the rights of subjects of the Empire; and it holds the Viceroy responsible for all the consequences of his illegal proceeding."

With the publication of this declaration European opinion received a mild shock, but all the Powers endorsed Germany's action. The *Journal des Débats* paid Bismarck the compliment of saying that "German diplomacy appears to act in the East, as everywhere else, with a capacity, emphasis, and opportuneness which are often lacking in the diplomacies of other countries." To this the *North German Gazette* replied that "The times are past when Germans abroad could be abandoned defenceless to high-handed treatment." Perhaps it was more to the point that this was an aspect of the Eastern question which concerned Russia only remotely, so that Germany was free to act with impunity. The Powers called for Ismail's abdication, and this promptly took effect; even the Sultan, when appealed to by the discredited Regent, refused to help him, and instead telegraphed his formal deposition (June 26th). His son Mohamed Tewfik was set up in his place, and the old system of Dual Control was re-established, a board of English and French commissioners being appointed to manage national finance, an arrangement which continued until the close of 1882. Germany's part in this arrangement was on the whole passive, for Bismarck was satisfied that intervention in Egypt should be left to the discretion of two Powers, to one of which Germany then stood in a cordial relationship and to the other in a relationship which was at least harmonious. " Germany," he said, "does not want to throw any stones into the Egyptian garden."

Following M. de Freycinet, Gambetta had become the French Premier and Foreign Minister in November, 1881, and from the moment of his entering into office he had endeavoured to obtain for France a predominant voice in Egyptian affairs, yet without hostility

to Great Britain. The new British Government which had come into power in April of the preceding year, with Mr. Gladstone at its head, had pledged itself to the maintenance of the *status quo,* had disclaimed any designs upon the independence of Egypt or any sympathy with active intervention, except in the event of anarchy occurring, and had let it be understood that if such action became necessary it would favour only the use of Turkish troops. Gambetta, on the other hand, was eager to find a pretext for direct intervention, and was determined that if it could be brought about France and Great Britain should enter Egypt together, and they alone. With no very clear idea of his own as to how an extreme situation would have to be met, Lord Granville, the British Foreign Secretary, was induced to adopt a French Note of January 6, 1882, in which the Khedive was assured that the two Governments would be behind him in his efforts to keep at bay the forces of disorder, and was bidden to "draw confidence and strength" from the fact. Lord Granville did, indeed, stipulate that his Government reserved decision as to the form which the support of the Khedive should take in given circumstances, but the Joint Note was none the less a pledge which sooner or later was bound to materialize in active intervention. In all the measures hitherto proposed for the settlement of the country Great Britain and France had loyally endeavoured to meet Germany's views, but they were not disappointed that Bismarck, while approving, had declined to join in enforcing them.

Egypt's troubles thickened when a spirit of revolt appeared in the army. There had been minor mutinies in 1879 and 1881, and on each occasion the Government had been compelled to capitulate. This success had taught the soldiery that in order to gain their way it was only necessary to demonstrate and threaten. Now the mutineers, chief among whom were many active officers, not only demanded the removal of grievances, but claimed to dictate to the Khedive and the Executive. Nor was discontent allayed when, in obedience to their will, the Khedive dismissed an unpopular War Minister and in February, 1882, put in his place the nominee of the disaffected officers, Ahmed Arabi, a colonel of humble origin. Arabi described himself as "l'étoile qui se lève sur la Mer Rouge." For Egypt he proved a very unpropitious star indeed. With his rise to influence the country passed under a military despotism, and for a time the Khedive had to

do the bidding of his masters under threat of deposition and death.

The crisis came in June, when rebellion, accompanied by the massacre of Europeans, occurred in Alexandria. The despatch of British and French squadrons to the port exasperated rather than restrained the mutinous soldiery, and now Arabi, placing himself at the head of a combined military and nationalist party, proclaimed war against all outside interference in Egyptian affairs. The reign of terror spread to Cairo and elsewhere, and the time for justifiable intervention which had been contemplated by the British Government seven months before seemed to have arrived. Now, however, it was France which held back, for at the end of January Gambetta had been overthrown, Freycinet had again come to power, and he promptly reversed his predecessor's aggressive policy. At the invitation of Great Britain the Powers, in the persons of their ambassadors, met in conference at Constantinople at the end of June, hampered, however, by the refusal of the Porte to send a representative to their meetings. While all the Powers were agreed that order must be restored, and that it could only be done by force, they were far from united upon the methods to be pursued. Germany, supported by Austria-Hungary, urged the formation of a Ministry acceptable to the military party as a whole, and even France wanted an arrangement with Arabi; but Great Britain favoured the unconditional overthrow of the arch-intriguer. On the question of intervention there was greater agreement, for most of the Governments supported the proposal that the Sultan should be invited to despatch troops to the disturbed province. That, however, would have meant indefinite delay, and meanwhile the condition of Egypt was fast passing from disorder into chaos. Great Britain now invited the Powers to join her in bombarding Alexandria, which Arabi was busily fortifying.

Bismarck still had no desire to interfere in any way. "Let the Powers interested settle it as they please," he wrote of the Egyptian embroglio in July, "but do not ask me how, for I neither know nor care." He wanted England and France to undertake the settlement of Egypt alone. France refused to co-operate, however, and Italy did the same, influenced by her treaty relations with Germany. The abstention of France created surprise, yet there were strong practical reasons for it. The principal one was a fear lest by taking part she might find herself committed to indefinite responsibilities – a fear justified by the

event – and to that extent handicapped in Europe, to the satisfaction and advantage of Germany. M. Clemenceau led the opposition to the proposal of joint intervention because he saw in it the hand of Bismarck. On the other hand, many politicians of note who did not share this suspicion of a German ruse were influenced in favour of abstention by the fact that the occupation of Tunis had not proved the easy task which it was expected to be and that France was occupied by enterprises in yet other parts of the world.

All such considerations would not have deterred Gambetta from adding Egypt to his country's existing responsibilities, and jealous as much for the prestige of France as for the success of her war policy, he urgently besought the Government not to abandon co-operation with Great Britain. Freycinet was, indeed, prepared to co-operate in defending the Suez Canal, but on July 29th the Chamber refused credits even for this purely precautionary measure. He resigned in consequence, and his Cabinet was succeeded by that of M. Duclerc, who on taking office gave a pledge to the Chamber that in the Egyptian affair he would act in loyal conformity with its vote. Thus it was that France virtually expelled herself from Egypt. One of those fateful moments in history which never return had passed unimproved by a nation whose statesmen have seldom failed to combine great foresight with quickness of decision.

With the withdrawal of the French fleet from Alexandria on the last day of July England was left isolated, but not greatly grieved over her isolation, which she had honestly done her best to prevent. In the events which immediately followed Bismarck gave England all the encouragement desired. Through the German ambassadors, both in London and Constantinople, he let Lord Granville understand that while he would not go so far as to give England a formal mandate to go to Egypt he would support her, if she went there, in any action which she might deem to be necessary, and instructions were, in fact, sent to the German Consul-General in Alexandria bidding him, in effect, to confine his functions to looking on.

Alexandria was bombarded on July 11th, and its forts having been reduced, troops were landed and took possession of the town. Arabi was now dismissed from office by the Khedive and declared a rebel by the Sultan. Following the Egyptian army, which was still in his hands, into the interior, a British expeditionary force under General Wolseley

inflicted upon it signal defeat at Tel-el-Kebir on September 13th.

From this single-handed intervention, resorted to unwillingly, followed now step by step the assertion of British supremacy in Egypt, which, though still remaining under the nominal sway of the Khedive, was henceforth governed not from Constantinople but from London. Lord Palmerston once declared that rather than join France in schemes of aggression in North Africa he would sacrifice England's alliance with that Power, greatly though he valued it. "We don't want to have Egypt," he wrote. "What we wish about Egypt is that it should continue attached to the Turkish Empire, which is a security against its belonging to any other European Power. That had been the policy of successive British Governments. In quite recent years Lord Salisbury and Lord Derby had declared on every suitable occasion that England would never annex Egypt, and that those who would not believe her word to that effect were incredulous only because of their own crooked ways. Mr. Gladstone, Lord Granville, and the Government to which they belonged were still of the same mind. They meant to retire, wished to retire, and probably would have retired had not events proved too strong for them. It is one of the romances of British history that a momentous step in the expansion of empire, from which even an aggressive imperialist like Palmerston shrunk less than a generation before, was taken by an administration of professed non-interventionists and friends of peace, to whom their opponents had hitherto denied the courage to say boo to a goose.

With the victory of Tel-el-Kebir, upon which Bismarck promptly sent to London his hearty congratulations, the first rebellion was at an end. The native army was disbanded, and Arabi and the other ringleaders were put on trial and exiled, greatly to their surprise, for with true Oriental fatalism and an equally true knowledge of their deserts they had expected death. Now it remained for the new rulers to take in hand the work of internal reorganization and undo the evil effects of centuries of misgovernment. Approaching the Powers with a request for a mandate, or rather for the endorsement of a mandate which she claimed in view of past sacrifices and present occupation, Great Britain stipulated for a free hand in internal affairs, subject to consultation with the Powers on questions of common concern, but gave the undertaking that British troops would remain in the country only so long as might be necessary to the re-establishment of

authority, order, and security.

Bismarck's influence was still used in England's favour. He did his best to persuade not only the Sultan but the Powers to concur in such measures as the British Government might propose to adopt, content that Germany should continue to remain, as before, a more or less passive spectator, whose voice should be heard only when necessary. Not so France, who now began to regret her refusal to accept any share of the responsibility of tranquillizing the country, and unreasonably to demand that though she had left England all the duties she should now share in the corresponding rights. With the commencement of the British occupation the Dual Control disappeared, greatly to the chagrin of France. When now a British adviser was appointed to superintend finance, she protested, and her protests being unregarded, she claimed full liberty of action. In the further measures adopted by the British Government France constantly figured as the importunate petitioner knocking for admission at a door which she had deliberately closed to herself. In the Egyptian house England now settled down for good, not as visitor or lodger, but as leaseholder on an indeterminate tenure, and having installed in her establishment a brand-new equipment of London furniture, in the shape of an efficient administrative system, she did her best to feel at home.

The time came, however, when Germany, so long the patient well-wisher, ceased to be patient with England or to wish her well in the task which she had undertaken, and made of the Egyptian question a lever wherewith to advance her own special interests elsewhere. She wished for nothing in Egypt, had staked nothing, and had sacrificed nothing, yet to Bismarck that was no reason why she should not turn to advantage her position there as a Great Power.

It was the colonial question, which Bismarck first took up in 1884. and the difficulties with England which immediately arose out of it, which directed his mind to Egypt as a legitimate means of relieving English pressure in other parts of the world. Reserving the colonial episode for later and more detailed treatment, all that is necessary here is to refer to the effects upon the general relations of the two countries of the untoward colonial controversies of that time. For some years Bismarck had been not only willing but genuinely desirous to be on good terms with England, and had a formal alliance been

possible under the English parliamentary system, he would probably have welcomed it. That he then or at any time entertained cordial feelings towards England or the English may be doubted. There were certain things in English political life in particular with which he was entirely out of sympathy – the democratic tendencies of legislation, the amazing vitality of Free Trade doctrines, and the generous toleration extended to the Roman Catholic Church – since England's practice in relation to them was in conflict with, and a condemnation of, the policy which was now being pursued in Germany. Yet difference upon such domestic matters was no just bar to agreement and co-operation in foreign affairs, and it was one of his fixed principles of public action that personal likes and dislikes should never be allowed to obtrude themselves in practical politics.

Early in the 'eighties the barometer of Bismarck's relations towards England was marked "marked fair," and was still rising. He had indulged in bitter words when in March, 1880, during his agitation over the Eastern question, Mr. Gladstone had in a passionate electioneering speech attacked Austria, Germany's ally, as a Power which nowhere in Europe had ever exerted an influence for good; but when on coming into office the following month the fervent orator repented of his exuberance and explained to Vienna that his words had been based on inaccurate evidence, the incident was not allowed to prejudice the relations between the two countries, much as Beaconsfield's disappearance was lamented in Berlin. Lord Granville, as we have seen, was Foreign Secretary in the new administration, and to him Lord Odo Russell was able to write from Berlin on May 1st: "I think you will find Prince Bismarck all you can wish, anxious for the most friendly relations with England and willing to act in concert with her Majesty's Government when asked to do so," while later in the same month he told how Bismarck had confided to him his inability to understand "why England should not be on terms as intimate and cordial with Germany as with France."

Bismarck was then at the height of his power, the arbiter of the policies of half the States of Europe. There was no Chancellery which did not believe, even if it did not admit, that nothing could be done in European affairs without his assent. Nervous Governments feared when he spoke and feared still more when he was silent. The friendship of such a man was deemed to be a flattery, his disregard a

misfortune, his hostility a disaster.

It might have seemed that Bismarck was only waiting for England to claim him as a willing ally. It has been shown that when the Egyptian difficulties arose he wished England to undertake the work of disentanglement and to do it, if she pleased, without France. He spoke, indeed, of Egypt at that time as the Schleswig-Holstein which would lead to a rupture between the two Powers if they attempted the dualism which had resulted so disastrously in the case of the Elbe duchies. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of that avowal, though with Bismarck the visible motive was not always that which chiefly determined his action. Bismarck wanted England and France to be friends, though perhaps not too cordial friends. He, indeed, wanted no nations to fight each other; if he was no pacifist, he was also no firebrand. His policy aimed rather at maintaining between the Powers just that suggestion of tension, that "minor state" of friction, which made it possible for him to intervene at any time, always in Germany's interest, as the impartial adviser and friend, either with the soothing word of conciliation, the encouraging word of sympathy, or, if need be, the stern word of caution, as circumstances dictated. For his desire to see England and France, in particular, on at least tolerable terms there was a particular reason, for so long as that relationship existed it was un likely that France would need to seek a friend in the East of Europe.

In the spring of 1882 Bismarck showed further his wish for good relations with England by sending his eldest son, Count Herbert, now a rising Councillor in the Foreign Office, to London, nominally in order to study English politics at first hand, in view of the diplomatic career which awaited him, but also, and perhaps mainly, in the hope that the progress of the desired entente, of which the German ambassador, Count Münster, did not seem to realize the full importance, might be expedited by this more visible token of good-will. Count Herbert had been given, both in town and country, a "good time," and Bismarck, always susceptible to personal attentions, had been deeply touched by the kindness shown to him not only by the political world but by London society generally. The mission was prolonged, on Lord Granville's suggestion, and the friendly assurances which the envoy extraordinary gave to the Foreign Office in London were confirmed in Berlin by Bismarck himself in intercourse with the

British ambassador. “The key to Bismarck’s policy,” Lord Ampthill (Lord Odo Russell) wrote on January 20, 1883, “is to be sought in the true interests of Germany, and those interests require the maintenance of the Anglo-French alliance and of intimate relations between England and Germany.” All this time, as we have seen, Bismarck was giving England consistent, timely, and invaluable support in Egypt. He had backed up her action in going there, and now (March, 1883), in conversation with the same ambassador, he advised that British troops should not be withdrawn from the country “before safety and stability could be guaranteed by England to Europe.” Bismarck seems to have known better than the British Government that such advice would defer withdrawal to the Greek Kalends.

The progress of friendly relations, begun in circumstances so favourable, was rudely disturbed by the frictions to which Germany’s earliest colonial adventures gave rise in 1884 and 1885. The unhappy story is told in its proper place – a story of masterful energy, dogged persistence, and finally of arrogant defiance on one side, and of weakness, prevarication, and, until too late, want of magnanimity on the other; above all, of clashing interests, mutual jealousies, and conflicting aims, the outcome of which was that the harmony and unity, upon the attainment of which so much effort had been ex pended, were suddenly dissipated like sunlight by a storm. It is questionable whether British statesmen, accustomed to a Ptolemaic view of their country’s relations to the rest of the world, not given to speculation upon cause and effect, and seldom disposed to look far ahead, took the rupture so tragically as it was taken in Germany. Bismarck’s resentment at what he regarded as inconsiderate treatment, however, was profound, and proportionate to the pains which he had taken to come nearer to the cold island nation which was so coy to woo and so hard to win, and the hopes which he had built upon an understanding with Governments which, as he scoffingly said, changed every fortnight.

He had warned the Foreign Office at an early stage in the colonial movement, when he saw that if Germany was to make headway it would be against British opposition, that unless a more friendly spirit were shown he would make advances to France, and cease to give to England the support in Egypt which she had hitherto received and now rewarded, as he thought, so ungratefully. When Lord Granville in

the House of Lords (February 27, 1885) said that Bismarck had advised him, and Beaconsfield before him, that England should "take Egypt," the Chancellor flatly contradicted him. In a wrathful speech made in the Imperial Diet on March 2nd, in which he recited a formidable list of the wrongs – some real, others trivial, others fabricated – done to himself and Germany by England in the course of a short twelve months, he declared that though British Ministers had deliberately gone to him for advice on the question of annexation, he had refused to think and decide for them.

"I have never," he said, "given any advice to the British Government as to the treatment of Egypt. I have certainly been asked for it on different occasions, and in every case the question addressed to me was whether I should be prepared to give the English Government 'an advice or a hint' as to what they should really do in Egypt and what would have our approval. To that question I have always answered that in my capacity as the Foreign Minister of the German Empire I must refrain from advising on English policy, since such ad vice, given in an official capacity, would carry a certain responsibility towards other Cabinets and also responsibility for the consequences which might result. I was then asked whether I would not express an opinion as to what might happen in Egypt. To this I replied that I could imagine that if I were the English Minister I should not at the present moment advise the annexation of Egypt, but that I recognized that it might be for England a necessity to have a certain secure position in this connecting link between its European and Asiatic dominions. Short of coming into collision with treaties, however, England could only obtain this position through the Sultan. I said, therefore, that if I were the English Minister I should seek the Sultan's mediation in order to obtain through him such a position as would safeguard English interests."

All this sounds just like what Bismarck might have said, had he not said something different. What did he really say? Later passages in the same speech seem to indicate that Lord Granville had not misrepresented him. After further talking round the subject he ended by admitting that he had advised England that she should seek to become a "leaseholder" in Egypt, and that he even went so far as to say that "If England should prefer to annex Egypt, we should not regard it as our duty to prevent it. The friendship of England would be

for us more important than the future fate of Egypt." Again, however, he denied that he positively advised annexation. Lord Granville's reply in the House of Lords to this direct imputation of misstatement did not lack dignity. It was in effect that if Bismarck did not give the advice which had been attributed to him, he did not, and there, with a thousand apologies, was an end of the matter; he had simply been misunderstood. This courteous acceptance of Bismarck's disclaimer, in the English gentleman's way, was received in Germany, by people without sufficient *finesse* of judgment to recognize that not to contradict an opponent's statements does not necessarily mean to accept them, as a humiliating confession of misrepresentation. Certainly, if Lord Granville was wrong he was wrong with many others, able to know the facts quite as well as he. Lord Odo Russell spoke as early as 18771 of Bismarck's constant incitements to Great Britain to take Egypt and to do it at once, before France should be strong enough to prevent it, though he was careful to add that the motive of Bismarck's generosity was a desire to make an Anglo-French alliance impossible. The only fact which emerged clearly from the controversy was that British Ministers had more than once taken counsel with the German Chancellor as to how they should conduct foreign affairs. They were not, however, the only Englishmen who appeared to forget at that time what was due to their country. Leaders of the Opposition thought it seemly to belittle the Queen's advisers by quoting against them the depreciatory estimates of the same statesman.

The rent in the Anglo-German friendship was now closed up, but with a patch; the new relationship was never again as sound and whole as the old, and for a long time England's position in Egypt suffered in consequence.

So menaced and uncertain did British tenure there appear in 1884 that in June Lord Granville concluded with M. Waddington, the French ambassador in London, a provisional agreement under which England was to withdraw from Egypt at the beginning of 1888, to neutralize the country on the principle of Belgium, to internationalize the highroad to the Indian Empire, the Suez Canal – of which England was now a principal proprietor – and, in Egyptian finance, to replace the control by many Powers for that of France and herself. In effect the agreement was a capitulation to France upon all points which to

her were of importance, and a sacrifice of every interest which England had so painfully established in the khediviate. The agreement gave satisfaction in France, and just in the same proportion created indignation at home. It hung, however, upon an uncertain contingency; its provisions were only to have effect in the event of the successful issue of a conference of the Powers to be held in London to consider the reform of Egyptian finance. This conference duly met at the end of June and quarrelled until the beginning of August, without arriving at an understanding. The Anglo-French agreement, therefore, fell to the ground.

The principal result of the abortive conference was to convince the British Government that it could no longer rely on the good-will of the Powers, and that whatever England did must be done on her own responsibility and at her own risk. Upon the financial question, however, Lord Granville in the spring of 1885 addressed to the Powers new proposals. Ger many and Austria replied that whatever satisfied France would be acceptable to them, and in the end it was in the main the proposals of France which were adopted. In the meantime (January, 1885), France, Austria, and Italy had supported a request of Germany and Russia that they should be allowed to nominate each one member of the Debt Commission, and the Egyptian Government agreed. The effect was to strengthen international control and to perpetuate the attendant frictions in an acuter form than before. In relation to all the measures proposed in 1885 by the British Government for the reorganization of Egyptian finances and their administration Germany found opportunities for obstructive reservations or counter-proposals, usually with support from France, Austria, or Russia, or all together.

Matters might have taken a still more serious turn had not Germany's good relations with France been disturbed by the fall of M. Ferry's Cabinet in March of that year. Allowing for temporary revulsions, due to resentment and pique, Bismarck must be given full credit for understanding the value to Germany of a good understanding with England. Recalled now by the uncertain situation in France to self-control and a due appreciation of the requirements of realist politics, he showed readiness to resume the old friendly intercourse with London where it was broken off. Hence when a little later France, taking him at his word, made advances with a view to

joint action against England she met with an equivocal response. Judging the question in the cold light of facts, Bismarck declared (in Prince Hohenlohe's words) that " France was too uncertain an ally to risk losing England's friendship for her sake. Their policy would therefore be, not to reject the advances of France brusquely, but to act dilatorily." And with Bismarck to act "dilatorily" meant as a rule not to act at all.

Any record of the later events in Egypt and its dependencies, the Mahdi's insurrection, with the evacuation and later reconquest of the Soudan, the pacification of the vast Nile territories, which had not known for centuries the blessings of order and settled government, and the work of reform and reconstruction done under the direction of Sir Evelyn Baring (afterwards Lord Cromer), belongs to a history of the British and not of the German Empire. Yet not Egypt alone, but all Europe, has shared in the fruits of the succeeding series of ameliorative measures – the reorganization of finance in such a manner that the country was enabled to pay its way and to improve its credit in the money markets of Europe; the narrowing down of the Capitulations with a view to restricting the illegitimate privileges of Europeans; the abolition of what Lord Cromer has called the three C's of past Egyptian demoralization, the courbash, the *corvée*, and corruption; the general cleansing of public administration; the development of national resources; the construction of irrigation works which turned deserts into fertile places and banished famine from the land; the victories of sanitation over plague and disease – works which restored to an ancient country more than its ancient prosperity, adapted its civilization to modern conditions, and redeemed in years the errors, follies, and crimes of generations. Germany's part and her credit lie in the fact that in course of time, convinced by the force of reason and the logic of events, she came to recognize that England had asserted her claim to remain in Egypt by a higher title than right of arms or possession can bestow – the will and the power to do for the native population greater and better things than it had ever done or could do for itself.

The question of the British occupation continued to be regarded as a convenient subject for bargaining, but more and more it ceased to have a practical and acquired merely a theoretical interest. France continued for many years to obstruct a work of progress in which it

was now too late for her to take part, and her opposition was only withdrawn when open questions and sources of discord between the two countries in every part of the world were closed as part of a comprehensive agreement. There never was a time when Germany formally conceded England's claim to continue alone in Egypt the work which she had been compelled to begin alone, or struck out of the list of her unrealised political assets the power to dispute the British occupation, but as time passed it became increasingly clear that such acquiescence was unnecessary. There are facts in political life which need no confirmation, since they confirm themselves, and as such a fact the British tenure of Egypt, in virtue of duties undertaken in the first place unwillingly yet throughout disinterestedly discharged, was in course of time tacitly regarded in Germany as elsewhere.

THE COLONIAL ERA, 1880-1890

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THE DECADE THAT SAW Germany formally committed to a policy of Protection was notable for another political departure which modified her relations with the outside world even more profoundly. During the five years from 1880 to 1885 the pioneer work upon which two generations of explorers and merchant adventurers had been engaged in various parts of the African Continent and elsewhere culminated in the creation of a large oversea dominion which at once placed Germany, in extent of territory – over a million square miles – in the front rank of colonial Powers.

No misconception of modern German history is more common or less justifiable than the assumption that the German colonial movement dates only from the year 1884, when, apparently without warning, Bismarck proclaimed the first oversea protectorate. Throughout their history the Germans had been conspicuous as colonizing agents, and in the German lands themselves one race had repeatedly superimposed its civilization upon that of another. A thousand years ago North German tribes moved eastward into the regions inhabited by the Slavic races and, having once settled there, gradually extended their influence over large areas, either supplanting or overshadowing the original populations. The Wendish province of Brandenburg was so colonized and afterwards brought into the old German Empire as a part of what is now Prussia. In the South, Saxon and Swabian colonists in the twelfth century established themselves in Transylvania and other parts of Hungary, where the towns of Hermannstadt, Kronstadt, and Klausenburg still remain as examples of the early “peaceful penetration” of Germanism in that part of Europe. So, too, the Russian Baltic provinces of Livonia, Courland, and Esthonia were colonized by the Teutonic knightly orders in the thirteenth century, and in modern times German colonies were founded in many other parts of the Russian Empire. The adventurous spirit of the North Germans was similarly shown in the formation in the thirteenth century of the great trading and maritime corporation known as the Hanseatic League, with depots not only in a large number of German towns but in many foreign countries. “Not Clive, but a Hamburg Senator,” wrote the Würtemberg publicist Moser over a hundred years ago, voicing the German lament of even that distant day over neglected imperialistic opportunities, “would command the Ganges to-day, had the aims of the Hanseatic towns been supported

instead of combated by the old Empire." The colonizing instinct was also illustrated in a striking way when the Augsburg commercial and banking house of Welser acquired the province of Caracas, in Venezuela, in virtue of a charter granted by Emperor Charles V, as security for a loan; whereupon the Fuggers, not to be outdone by their townsmen, immediately obtained permission from the same Emperor to search for and exploit minerals on part of the coast of Chile. The difficulty of keeping territories so far distant proved greater than the acquisition of them, and these adventures were soon abandoned.

The first serious attempts to create the beginnings of a German colonial empire were made in the last quarter of the seventeenth century by the Great Elector of Brandenburg. His objects in so doing were more commercial than political or imperialistic in the modern sense. The Brandenburg rulers have always been good men of business, and none had a clearer idea than the Great Elector of the value of trade for his country. "The surest sources of wealth and prosperity for a country come from commercium," he wrote to his Privy Councillor Fuchs; "navigation and trade are the most honourable pillars of a State." His first foreign venture was the foundation in 1647 of the Brandenburg East India Company, but towards the close of his long reign he conceived the idea of extending his rule to West Africa. After unsuccessfully trying to bargain with France for the establishment of a settlement in Guinea, he despatched to that region in 1680 two Dutch captains named Raulé and Blonk with several ships, flying the Brandenburg flag, in order "to carry on trade and industry there without injury to any one." Landing at Cape Three Points, on the Gold Coast, the explorers concluded treaties with native chiefs at Axim, by which the Elector was granted local territorial and trading rights. A year later he transferred these rights to the African Trading Company of Berlin (later of Emden), in which he was largely interested as a shareholder. Thus it was that there came into existence at Axim (1682-3) the fort Gross Friedrichsburg, the nucleus of the first Prusso- German colony to be established across the seas.

Nor was this the Great Elector's only imperialistic design. He also endeavoured to gain a footing in America, and he negotiated for the acquisition of one of the Antilles. His greatest ambition, however, was to have a share in the wealth of the East Indies, and it was with that end in view he formed his East India Company, but the project never

prospered. He died in 1688, before his colonial schemes had matured or secured a lasting hold upon the imagination or faith of his subjects. His successor, Frederick III, the first King of Prussia, continued his interest in colonial undertakings. In the second year of his reign his fleet occupied Crab Island, between St. Thomas and Puerto Rico, and later he conceived the idea of acquiring the Isthmus of Panama, but the opposition of Spain prevented the realization of this bold design. Under the following ruler the African enterprise was abandoned. It had never prospered, and after he had subsidized it for a long time he sold it in 1717 to the Dutch West Indies Company for a sum which barely met the outstanding debts. In 1871 Great Britain acquired this strip of African territory and added it to Cape Coast Castle.

Thus the first Prussian experiment in colonial enterprise came to a premature and inglorious end. Brandenburg then possessed neither the ships, the money, nor the men needed to carry it to a successful issue. Now for two centuries Prussia and Germany remained without colonies, for what the largest of the German States had failed to accomplish no other had the power, the will, or the resource to attempt. The third King of Prussia, Frederick the Great, brought new maxims into Prussian statecraft, and one of these was expressed in the words, “All distant possessions are a burden to the State. A village on the frontier is worth a principality two hundred and fifty miles away.” Hence when the famous Colberger Joachim Nettelbeck, after making expeditions to the West Indies and the Guinea Coast, proposed to the King in 1786 that Prussia should again secure an African colony and also one in Surinam he declined to be tempted.

Nevertheless, the formation of free German settlements in various parts of the world continued. The first emigration of Germans to North America had been contemporaneous with the Great Elector’s colonial adventures. William Penn visited Germany in 1677, and six years later the first body of settlers crossed the Atlantic. These emigrants were followed by others, and throughout the whole of the succeeding century the movement westward continued. With the beginning of the nineteenth century began emigration to South America, and principally to Brazil. In the meantime Russia continued to attract many settlers as before, and agricultural colonies of Germans were formed in Turkey, Greece, Roumania, Palestine, and elsewhere. After the Napoleonic wars emigration to America in particular took large

dimensions, though later there was a smaller stream to Brazil, Mexico, and certain of the British colonies, notably Canada, Australia, and Tasmania. From 1830 the outward flow of population became stronger, and it has been estimated that, after allowing for a large amount of repatriation, four and a half million Germans emigrated during the first eighty years of last century, all but half a million seeking new homes in the United States. From the middle of the century forward the movement was assisted by a host of emigration societies, the majority working on philanthropic, but some on purely commercial, lines.

An important part was played in the creation of a spirit of colonization by the German religious missions, of which the earliest, the Rhenish Mission of Barmen, and the work of the Bohemian Brethren, dated from 1729 and 1732 respectively, but a far greater influence was exerted by the enterprise and reports of the many indefatigable travellers and explorers who began to be active in various parts of the world from the beginning of last century. The objects of these men were for a long time purely scientific, but later imperialistic and commercial motives came into play. Following Alexander von Humboldt came, in the early decades of the century, Burckhardt and Hornemann (who both entered the service of an English exploration society), Rüppell, Ehrenberg, Rose, Prokesch, Hemprich, Schlimper, Kutte, and Kielmayer. In the middle of the century, in particular, exploration received a strong im petus, and more than before Africa became the goal of endeavour. Leichardt, Rebmann, Overweg, Barth, Krapf, Vogel, Beurmann, Peters, Maltzan, the brothers Schlagentweit, Karl von der Decken, Gerhard Rohlfs, Karl Mauch, and others did notable work at that time; while explorers of later fame were Gustav Nachtigal, Robert Flegel, Pogge, Gustav and Clemens Denhardt, Güssfeld, Fritsch, Schweinfurth, Buchner, Hermann Wissmann, Junker, and Eduard Schnitzler, better known as Emin Pasha.

Gradually the colonial cause found advocacy in the literature of the day – in works of travel, political essays, and economical writings. One of the earliest writers to revive national interest in the question was Friedrich List, whose influence upon his country's material development was fruitful in so many directions. In proposing the acquisition of colonies while large portions of the world were still

unappropriated, List sought rather to provide outlets for Germany's surplus population than to create markets for her trade. Wilhelm Roscher similarly pressed the claims of colonial policy. "The fruits of colonization," he wrote in one of his earliest works, "are usually reaped only in the second generation, and such long waiting is not to the mind of our time. Yet Germany must lose no time if the last suitable territories are not to be seized by other and more resolute nations."

Colonization was much discussed in political circles early in the 'forties. Charles Greville relates in his *Memoirs* how, when visiting Germany in 1843, he was surprised to hear people talking of the need for "colonies and a navy." The idea of emulating his ancestor, the Great Elector of Brandenburg, occurred at that time to the fertile mind of the visionary Frederick William IV, who, encouraged by his envoy Bunsen in London, sanctioned the opening of negotiations for the purchase of California, then subject to Mexico, for the reception of the Germans who were at that time seeking their fortunes in America by the hundred thousand yearly. The Prussian envoy at Washington favoured the proposal, but Alexander von Humboldt appears to have dissuaded the King. Several years later California became independent, and in 1850 it joined the United States.

Fresh stimulus was given to the movement by several associations of a politico-economical character which were formed early in the second half of the century. The most important of these was the "Central Association for Commercial Geography and the Promotion of German Interests Abroad," founded in 1868 at the instigation of the traveller Otto Kersten, with its headquarters in Berlin. A branch of this society, the West German Association for Colonization and Export, of Düsseldorf, became later a powerful propagandist agency in the cause, amalgamating in 1882 with the German Colonial Association, then formed at Frankfort. Other societies which, though originally following purely scientific objects, did useful work for the colonial cause were the German Society for the Scientific Exploration of Equatorial Africa, dating from 1873, and the German African Society of 1876; these societies were in 1878 merged in the German African Society of Berlin, which furnished many explorers of the Dark Continent. Later the German Colonial Society was formed (1881), and after it the Society for German Colonization (1884), the forerunner of

the German East Africa Company.

Most of the earlier colonial propagandists had in mind merely the establishment on foreign soil of German settlements of the old conventional kind, and only seldom was the occupation of territory with political sovereignty contemplated. After the middle of the century, however, the movement passed into this more practical channel. Now travellers and explorers were no longer content to bring back merely the scientific results of their investigations, and their efforts took more and more a distinctly acquisitive turn. Many of them returned home fired with imperialistic ambitions, eager to see Germany emulate the enterprise of the older colonial Powers, and these men soon obtained a ready hearing. Von der Decken, who during the years 1860 to 1865 explored the Kilimanjaro country and various parts of the East African coast between Cape Delgado and the Juba river, where he lost his life, wrote home in August, 1864: "I am persuaded that in a short time a colony established here would be most successful, and after two or three years would be self-supporting. It would become of special importance after the opening of the Suez Canal. It is unfortunate that we Germans allow such opportunities of acquiring colonies to slip by, especially at a time when it would be of importance to the navy." He conceived the idea of buying Mombasa and making it the nucleus of a great trading settlement, and he predicted that "After two or three years' stay at Chagga, on the eastern shore of the Victoria Nyanza, the colonists would obtain better results than emigrants to America." He added: "I recommend to my country an enterprise as advantageous as it is glorious for individuals and for the nation." Five years later Mauch, after exploring the Zambesi and visiting Mashonaland and the Transvaal, wrote of the latter country: "Would to God that this fine country might become a German colony!" Similarly, Gerhard Rohlfs, returning to Germany after exploration in the Cameroons country, addressed to his countrymen the appeal: "Is it not deplorable that we are obliged to assist, inactive and without power to intervene, in the extension of England in Central Africa?"

The movement now found warm supporters in the Hanseatic merchants and planters who had long been active in many parts of the world – wherever, in fact, trade was to be done under peaceful conditions. In Africa these traders were settled in Zanzibar, the South-

west, and Liberia as early as the 'forties; and during the two following decades they established themselves in Sierra Leone, Lagos, Togoland, and the Cameroons, on the West Coast, and in Mozambique and Somaliland, on the East Coast; while farther afield they became rivals of British enterprise in Australasia and the South Seas. Not possessing colonies of their own, Prussia and the North German Confederation, as later the Empire, concluded most-favoured-nation treatment treaties with European States and treaties of friendship and commerce with independent native rulers in respect of such territories. Nevertheless, the German traders settled in Africa grew increasingly impatient as they saw other countries add to their possessions while their own country still remained landless and inactive, though gradually the continent was being partitioned. Amongst the countries recommended half a century ago as fields for colonial enterprise were Madagascar, Formosa, Uruguay, North Borneo, Hainan, *Timor*, the Philippines, New Guinea, Zululand, Tripoli, Tunis, and Morocco.

Attractive as some of these schemes must have appeared, however, they failed to secure official encouragement. Since 1862 Bismarck had been the Minister-President and Foreign Minister of Prussia, and since 1867 the Federal Chancellor and Foreign Minister of the North German Confederation, and he was too much occupied with domestic and military questions, and above all with the question of Germany's consolidation, to give a thought to projects of colonial expansion. To him it was premature and incongruous to talk of a German empire abroad before the German Empire had been established at home, and, moreover, the Prusso-German navy was far too small to be the support of a policy of imperialism, and there was no money to spare for its increase. Nevertheless, the proposal to appropriate New Guinea, though entirely unofficial, created excitement in Australia at the time, and the British Government was urged to annex the island at once, before it was forestalled, a warning which was not heeded.

Bismarck's first important utterance on the colonial question is contained in a letter written on January 9, 1868, to Roon, then Minister of War and Marine. In it he contended that the promotion of colonial undertakings was a matter for private enterprise, and not for the Government; he endorsed Roon's opinion that the navy was not strong enough to enable the Government to assume political responsibilities across the seas; he questioned whether from the

material standpoint colonies were advantageous; convinced that they would be a cause of serious deficits, he held it to be "difficult to justify the imposition of heavy taxation upon the whole nation for the benefit of a few branches of trade and industry"; and finally, he feared that "the attempt to establish colonies in territories whose suzerainty is claimed by other States, whether rightly or wrongly, might lead to manifold and undesirable disputes."

Two years later the negotiations of terms of peace with France seemed to afford to Germany the opportunity of entering into a colonial house already swept and garnished. There were men in high position who would have made the cession of colonial territory an important part of the indemnity. Cochin China, Tahiti, Réunion, the Marquesas Islands, even Algeria and Madagascar were all mentioned; but, supported by his Liberal and individualistic colleague, Rudolf Delbrück, he turned a deaf ear to the voices of the colonial charmers. "I want no colonies," he said at the time; "they are only good for providing offices. For us colonial enterprises would be just like the silk sable in Polish noble families, who, for the rest, are without shirts." Three years later (1873) he said to Mr. Odo Russell: "Colonies would be a source of weakness, because they could only be defended by powerful fleets, and Germany's geographical position did not necessitate her development into a first-class maritime Power." He said then that he had been urged repeatedly to acquire colonies but had refused: at the most he "wished for coaling stations acquired by treaty with other nations." In holding this standpoint he had the approval of an influential body of politicians and economists, yet it cannot be questioned that he showed a great lack of prevision, for vast territories were then still to be had for the claiming, and the opportunities which were allowed to slip by unimproved never returned.

Thus it was that during the first decade of the new Empire the colonial movement continued as before to be almost altogether an unofficial movement; its adherents in political, scientific, and commercial circles were steadily growing, yet the Foreign Office, and most of all its head, the Chancellor, looked on in cautious inaction, apparently willing at the most to follow, but not willing in any circumstances to lead. Of the political parties represented in the Diet only the two Conservative groups and the National Liberals were as

yet favourable to the movement. The Radicals, true to their individualistic principles, were conspicuously hostile; the Clericals individually were divided in sympathy, yet as a party they held back, as much for diplomatic reasons as lack of conviction; while the smaller groups were either unfriendly or sceptical. The sentiment of the large uninformed section of the public outside was in the main determined by the attitude of Prince Bismarck himself.

When, therefore, in 1872, the ruler of the Fiji Islands, and in 1874 the Sultan of Zanzibar, asked for the protection of the Empire, Bismarck promptly declined to give it; and the Fiji Islands went to Great Britain soon afterwards. When in 1874 the Sultan of the Sulu Archipelago sought protection for Sulu and the portion of North Borneo over which he claimed suzerainty it was likewise withheld. In that year also Bismarck refused to comply with the petition of Hamburg firms engaged in the Cameroons that he would establish at Fernando Po a consulate-general for West Africa, and he seemed to welcome the action of the United States Government in proposing to declare a protectorate over Samoa in 1875. On the occasion of a dispute with Spain in 1874 he avowed the renunciation of colonies as a deliberate act of German policy, while at the same time insisting on the duty of other countries to reciprocate by showing fair play to German trade in their colonial territories. “If the Government of his Majesty” (the German Emperor), he wrote to the Madrid Cabinet (March 4th), “renounces the pursuance of a colonial policy of its own, it is all the more bound to protect German trade against unjustifiable interferences.” When a German official in the Chinese service proposed the establishment of German settlements in China, to which end the Government was urged to acquire a concession on the Yangtse-Kiang river, and Bismarck was asked by the Crown Prince to consider and report on the idea, the answer given was that Germany had neither money nor the right men for such an enterprise, and that to undertake it would entail indefinite responsibilities which might weaken her position abroad. About 1876 a representative body of colonial politicians and African merchants laid before him a formal scheme of colonization, to include the acquisition of Delagoa or St. Lucia Bay, but they received no encouragement.

So little jealous was Bismarck of the imperialistic aspirations of other Powers at that time that at the Berlin Congress in 1878 he urged

France to take Tunis, pressed Egypt upon Great Britain, and pointed Italy to Tripoli. As late as February 22, 1880, Prince Hohenlohe, recording a conversation with him, wrote: “Now, as before, he will not hear of colonies. He says we have not an adequate fleet to protect them, and our bureaucracy is not skilful enough to administer them. He also spoke of my report on the French designs on Morocco, and declared that we could only be pleased if France took possession of the country.” The refusal of the Diet in the following April to approve the granting of a small subsidy, by way of guarantee of interest, to a company which had been formed to develop the commercial resources of Samoa in Germany’s interest convinced Bismarck that public opinion was yet far from being sympathetic to colonial enterprises and risks. Later in the year (November) some Berlin bankers and merchants placed before him an elaborate plan for the acquisition and development of New Guinea, but he declined to consider it, and the same fate attended a North Borneo scheme which was pressed upon his attention.

If, however, Bismarck was still holding back the colonial movement, it is impossible to resist the conclusion that had private enterprise from the first relied more upon itself, its own energy and resources, and followed its own counsels, instead of looking to the State for encouragement, patronage, and assistance, Germany might have won for herself far sooner than she did a prominent place amongst colonial Powers. Nevertheless, his lukewarmness failed to daunt the spirits of the men who were behind the movement. The more difficult it seemed to move him, the more their efforts and schemes multiplied. Patriotic feeling had revolted at the idea of German explorers continuing to open up undeveloped territories for other nations to appropriate at a later date and of German emigrants serving simply to populate alien countries and fill up the waste places of their colonial empires. “The question for us to consider,” wrote the German colonial pioneer Moldenhauer in 1878, “is whether Germany is prepared to do anything else than send scientific missions to Africa and to strew the continent with the bones of her explorers.” Active propagandism was again made at this time for the colonization of various parts of Africa, in the North-west, East, South-east, and South-west; and now Damaraland and Namaqualand received serious notice for the first time.

It was in 1880 that the movement came officially before the attention of the British Government. In November of the preceding year the traveller Ernst von Weber published in the *Geographische Nachrichten* of the Berlin Geographical Society a glowing panegyric upon South Africa, with an appeal to the Government to establish a new Germany there by the amalgamation under imperial influence of the Dutch republics and the territories lying to the north. It was Weber's idea to acquire Delagoa Bay and then, by means of a railway to Pretoria, to pass Germans into the Transvaal with a view "to secure the future dominion over the country and so to pave the way for the foundation of a German-African empire," for even the Transvaal was only to serve as a base from which to push forward German influence step by step to the Zambesi. The article does not appear to have attracted the attention of the British diplomatic representatives in Germany, but it was seen by Sir Bartle Frere, the Governor at the Cape, and he in alarm forwarded a translation to the Colonial Office, which in turn sent it to the Foreign Office. Submitted to him for his observations, Lord Odo Russell, in a despatch of September 18, 1880, pooh-poohed Weber's idea and that of German colonization in general with a too easy confidence. " Herr von Weber's plan," he replied, "will not meet with any support, either at the hands of the German Government or on the part of the German Parliament. . . . The German Parliament has marked its disinclination to acquire distant dependencies, however advantageous to German enterprise, by the rejection of the Samoa Bill. Under present circumstances the plan for a German colony in South Africa has no prospect of success." Thus assured, the Ministers concerned appear to have smiled at the phantom of colonial rivalry with Great Britain and to have dismissed the matter from their minds.

The historian Treitschke, too, at that time built expectations upon South Africa, where with the eye of desire he foresaw the decay of British power. "In the South of Africa," he wrote in 1878, "circumstances are decidedly favourable to us. English colonial policy, which has been successful everywhere else, has not succeeded at the Cape. The civilization which exists there is Teutonic, is Dutch. If our Empire has the courage to follow an independent colonial policy with determination, a collision between our interests and those of England is unavoidable."

Bismarck's ultimate surrender on the question of colonization must be attributed to a chain of events the cumulative effect of which left him almost without choice in the matter. Perhaps most of all he was influenced by the feverish colonial activity which other nations – notably France, Portugal, and Belgium – were showing in Africa at the beginning of the 'eighties, since this gave rise to the apprehension that unless Germany bestirred herself without delay she would inevitably be excluded from what promised to be the final partition of Africa. In September, 1876, there had met at Brussels, at the invitation of the King of the Belgians, the memorable conference of geographers which led to the founding of the *Société Africaine internationale*, the forerunner of the strictly Belgian *Comité des études du Haut Congo*, and had given a powerful impetus to colonizing enterprise in the Dark Continent. H. M. Stanley and De Brazza were exploring Central Africa, the former on behalf of the King of the Belgians and the latter in the service of France. France, too, had just claimed Tunis (1881), and was about to appropriate Madagascar. Portugal was seeking to obtain international recognition for her ancient but obscure claim to suzerainty over the mouth of the Congo. Finally, Great Britain had taken the first steps towards abolishing dual control in Egypt and establishing herself – though this result was not discerned by the Government of the day – as mistress of the Nile and its territories.

He was also influenced by an untoward and still outstanding dispute with England over the status of German settlers in the Fiji Islands, which had led him to believe that German subjects in British colonies could not count upon the same consideration as of old. The dispute related to the land claims which had been acquired by these settlers from native Governments prior to the final declaration of British sovereignty over the islands in 1874. The colonial land commission had set the claims aside as invalid, while Bismarck had now for nearly ten years been vainly urging that they should at least be submitted to the adjudication of a joint tribunal. The grievance rankled, and the moral to which it pointed was plain; never again must German subjects be allowed to look to other countries for a protection which it was within the power of their own Government to give them.

It is to be noted also that emigration – implying a diminution of the Empire's military strength – was again ominously increasing. It

had been large in the two years following the war with France, viz. 126,000 in 1872 and 104,000 in 1873, but during the succeeding years it had fallen to an insignificant figure. The high-water mark was reached only in the succeeding decade, when as many as 220,000 Germans sought new homes across the ocean in a single year. The loss which Germany thus suffered was also permanent, for these emigrants settled under alien flags, and seldom returned to their native country.

All these considerations stimulated colonial agitation in Germany in a high degree and forced the question upon the Government's attention with a greater urgency than before. Several new propagandist organizations were formed about this time, notably the German Colonial Association of 1882, which, backed by men of eminence in public life, at once exerted great influence both in Parliamentary and Ministerial circles.

Yielding to pressure from various sides, Bismarck now abandoned his past negative attitude towards colonial enterprise. If, however, to most onlookers in other countries the change appeared dramatic in its suddenness, the shock which it caused them was solely due to the fact that they had not sufficiently, if at all, distinguished in the past between official policy and private action – the one hitherto consistently hesitant, unsympathetic, and unwilling to countenance colonial enterprise in the absence of a clear national mandate, the other concentrated with unwearying zeal upon its objective and urging forward the Government with all the force and resource at its command. Nowhere were the surprise and the shock greater than in Great Britain, whose diplomatic representatives in Germany had clearly failed to allow for the strength of national sentiment and its importance as a motive force in political life.

The first definite appropriation of territory by Germany was due to the initiative of a Bremen merchant, F. A. L. Lüderitz, one of a small band of commercial imperialists who had long endeavoured to persuade Bismarck to declare himself openly for a policy of expansion in Africa. For some years he had aimed at the acquisition of the extensive territories of Namaqualand and Damaraland, lying between Cape Colony and the Portuguese protectorate of Angola. Since 1842 there had been a German Protestant mission at Bethany, the chief town of Namaqualand, and many German traders had settled in the land, but there had been no claim to occupation. Great Britain, the

only European Power then interested in South Africa, had in 1878 appropriated the better of the two harbours of the region, Whale (Walfisch) Bay, later annexed to Cape Colony, lying midway on a coastline of over a thousand miles, but the rest of the territory was unclaimed.

The entire attitude of the British Government at that time was opposed to the extension of its responsibilities in that region. In sanctioning the annexation of the Orange River in 1850 the Privy Council had besought the Queen to let that be the last British annexation in South Africa, and had recommended "that all officers who represent or who may hereafter represent your Majesty in Southern Africa should be interdicted in terms as explicit as can be employed, and under sanctions as grave as can be devised, from making any additions, whether permanent or provisional, of any territory, however small, to the existing dominions of your Majesty in the African Continent." From that time successive British Colonial Ministers refused to assent to the annexation of further territory, even when petitioned to do so by the German missionaries settled in Damaraland and by the native chiefs.

The rule then laid down was confirmed when in 1867 the Governor of Cape Colony, Sir Philip Wodehouse, urged the declaration of British sovereignty over the South-west Coast as far as 22° of S. latitude, a bold stroke which would have brought into the Empire the entire region between Cape Colony and Angola; for the answer of the Colonial Secretary of that day, the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos (August 23rd), was a flat refusal. All that was done at the time was to annex the small guano islands in the neighbourbood of Angra Pequena. Similarly, when in 1877 Sir Bartle Frere again wrote to Lord Carnarvon, urging that British sovereignty should be proclaimed over the same territory and also from Natal to the frontiers of the Portuguese colony on the opposite coast, his advice was rejected.

Nevertheless, when in the summer of 1880 war broke out between the Namaquas and the Hereros (of Damaraland) and the German settlers sought the Empire's protection, Bismarck's first step was to ask the Government in London if it would be willing to afford to German subjects the same protection which was enjoyed by the British. On November 29th Lord Granville, as Foreign Secretary, gave the desired undertaking, but with diplomatic caution added the reservation that

the British Government could not assume responsibility for any events which occurred outside British territory, which was said to be confined to " Whale Bay and a very small portion of country immediately surrounding it." This answer was clearly an implicit disavowal of any claim to other suzerain rights in that part of Africa, and as such it was later interpreted by Germany. In that year all British officials were withdrawn from Damaraland, and Whale Bay remained the only point on the South-west Coast at which British influence was represented. As late as December 30th Lord Kimberley wrote to Sir Hercules Robinson, then Governor of the Cape and High Commissioner for South Africa, that "It is the opinion of her Majesty's Government that the Orange River is to be regarded as the north-western frontier of Cape Colony, and the Government will not give its support to plans for extending British jurisdiction over Great Namaqualand and Damaraland." The war in Damaraland continued through the year 1881, but it does not appear that any measures were taken by the British Government to ensure the safety of the German settlers and their property, though inquiry on the subject was renewed in October.

For another year these territories continued to be no-man's land; the British did not claim them, and no one else wanted them. Then in November, 1882, Lüderitz asked his Government if he might count on protection in the event of his acquiring territory on the Namaqualand coast. Bismarck gave a promise, subject to the condition that the lands in question were not claimed by any other Power. Having received the assurance that the Empire would be behind him, the Bremen merchant bought from the native chiefs their rights to a stretch of coastal territory extending from the Orange River to the bay of Angra Pequena, and duly claimed his country's protection. Other German traders concluded treaties with chiefs in the remaining part of Namaqualand and also in Damaraland.

In the meantime Bismarck had instructed Count Münster, the German ambassador in London (February 4, 1883), to inform the British Foreign Office of Lüderitz's plans, and to inquire whether it exercised rights of sovereignty over or was in a position to give protection to the Angra Pequena region, and to state that if this were not the case the German Government reserved the right to do so. Lord Granville replied that before a definite answer could be given it would

be necessary to consult the Cape Government. Bismarck asserted later that he only approached the British Foreign Office at all in the matter for the purpose of allowing it to disclaim prior occupation and so to certify his action as regular, and that he had no idea of inviting the Foreign Office to set up claims on its own account. The minute of the verbal inquiries made at the Foreign Office by the German embassy (February 7th) certainly conveys the impression that if the British Government had been prepared to give protection to Lüderitz's properties Germany would then have been content to stand aside, for it was said that she had not "the least design to establish any footing in South Africa." Not only so, but Count Münster's despatch to Berlin (February 26th) reporting later conversations at the Foreign Office admits of no other conclusion that this was Bismarck's original standpoint, though it was soon abandoned for one less passive.

At the outset of the episode, therefore, Bismarck's action was as considerate as the response of the British Foreign Office was fitting and regular. He certainly did not act precipitately, and the presumption is that he was unwilling that Germany's first colonial venture should create friction. For precipitate action there was little opportunity. For nine months Bismarck's inquiries remained unanswered, and it was only after the British Foreign Office had twice been reminded that he was still waiting for an answer (September 10th and November 16th) that Lord Granville broke silence (November 21st). The reply was that although the British Government had claimed sovereignty at two points only of the southwest coast, viz. Whale Bay and the islands lying outside the harbour of Angra Pequena, it was of opinion "that any claim to sovereignty or jurisdiction by a foreign Power between the southern point of Portuguese jurisdiction at latitude 18 and the frontier of Cape Colony would infringe their legitimate rights." In other words, Great Britain did not even now claim prior rights, but only objected to another Power stepping in where she had hitherto not cared to tread. The German Government refused to understand how a country could have legitimate rights in regard to territory over which it simultaneously disclaimed sovereignty, and first in a verbal communication and then in a despatch of December 31st it asked for the production of proof of British title to the disputed territories. It was at this juncture that Bismarck decided to abandon the rôle of petitioner for British

protection, and asked himself why Germany should not herself appropriate the country and take into her own care those of her subjects who might wish to settle there.

Now a further unfortunate delay of several months was allowed to occur before Berlin again heard from London. For the Foreign Office had handed the matter over to the Colonial Office, and the Colonial Secretary, Lord Derby, was sounding the Cape Ministry as to the propriety of an anticipatory annexation on its own account. During this time Bismarck, to all appearance, was still halting between two opinions on the general question of colonization. More than once he told the Diet that if it did not want colonies, and was not prepared to meet the contingent liabilities, he would certainly not force them upon it, and that it was for the nation and not the Government to give the necessary impetus to practical measures of the kind. “I can only advise you,” he said in January, 1884, when asking for a vote for the establishment of mail steamship services to Africa and America, “to accept this Bill and therewith decide to retain and follow colonial policy in the sense in which the Hanseatic pioneers of our foreign trade began it, and in which the Government has taken it under its protection. If, however, you refuse this little vote, I shall accept the implication: you will have said ‘No,’ and responsibility for the consequences of so doing will rest with you and not with me.”

Before he finally made up his mind to comply with Lüderitz’s request he caused a memorandum on the whole question of the acquisition and administration of colonies to be prepared by the director of colonial affairs in the Foreign Office, Herr von Kusserow. In this important report, dated April 8, 1884, the view was taken that the Government should proceed by the method of Royal Charters, such as had been granted to British colonial companies – and so lately as in 1881 to the British North Borneo Company – leaving the administration of the territories to the companies and confining the Empire’s responsibility to the stationing of ships of war in African waters and the establishment of a sufficient consular system. This view Bismarck adopted, and it became the keynote of his attitude towards all later colonial enterprises.

When the negotiations with Great Britain had lasted a year without reaching a definite issue, Bismarck determined to follow his own course. Herr von Kusserow has related how in April, 1884, he

asked his chief whether he should again inquire in London when an answer to the Note of December 31st might be expected, whereupon Bismarck rejoined "Now we will act!" Accordingly he despatched (April 24th) to the German consul-general at Capetown a telegram proclaiming a protectorate over the entire coast between the Orange River and Angra Pequena, and in order that there might be no misunderstanding he simultaneously informed Lord Granville of what he had done.

Up to that time and for another month the Foreign Office had not replied to Bismarck's letter of December 31st, inviting the production of proofs of the exercise of effective sovereignty. In the event proofs were not produced, because they did not exist. At last the Colonial Office received word from the Cape Government on May 29th that it proposed to undertake the control of the coastline from the Orange River to Whale Bay, including Angra Pequena, ignoring the fact that Germany had already proclaimed a protectorate over the latter region, whereupon the Colonial Office asked the Foreign Office to inform the German Government accordingly. This, however, was not done, for Lord Granville had the good sense to recognize that it was too late to set up claims for which there were not a shadow of justification, and which if advanced were sure to be contested by Germany on the ground of prior right. In a strong despatch of June 10th, marked by the "corporal tone" of which the Austrian Foreign Office had complained twenty years before, Bismarck reproached Lord Granville and Lord Derby with having interpreted his inquiries as an invitation to the British Government to annex the disputed territory, when all he had wished to know was whether Great Britain possessed "demonstrable legal claims or title to occupation in those regions," a question, he said, which might have been "exhaustively answered in a week without referring it to the Cape."

He had a feeling, he said, that Great Britain was not treating Germany as an equal, and he protested against the setting up of a Monroe Doctrine in Africa in the exclusive interest of Great Britain. He instructed Count Münster, therefore, that he must not encourage the idea that Germany was willing to sacrifice her vital interests to her wish for a good understanding with Great Britain, sincere though that wish was. Count Herbert Bismarck, the Chancellor's eldest son, then an official in the Foreign Office in Berlin, was sent to London with

these instructions, nominally in order to communicate them with greater emphasis, but in reality to take charge of colonial affairs at the embassy, which was not credited with showing the requisite decision and strength.

The Angra Pequena episode, perplexing enough because of the conflicting claims involved and the fact that on the British side two Departments of State, whose interests, or at least sympathies, were not entirely identical, were concerned, was further complicated by extraneous issues. Cross-currents of a political character were flowing all the time, so that it soon became hopeless to expect that the question involved would be decided solely on its merits. It was in the summer of 1884 that the collective protest of the Powers against the Anglo- Portuguese Congo Treaty of the preceding February was organized, Germany here working cordially together with France. Moreover, Great Britain was at that time hampered by her uncertain position in Egypt, and it rested with Germany to cast a decisive influence either for or against her.

In a despatch of May 5th, forwarded to Count Münster for communication to the British Foreign Secretary, Bismarck gave expression to his favourite maxim "Do ut des," for he said frankly that while he was able and willing to co-operate with Great Britain on the Egyptian question there must be a *quid pro quo,* and it must be offered in the domain of colonial affairs. Later Bismarck complained in the Diet that he had received no reply to this despatch, which for better effect he produced to the affronted deputies. Lord Granville promptly rejoined that his Government had not answered it because it had not been received. Inquiry brought to light the fact that Bismarck had himself countermanded it.

It was at this time that Germany first raised the question of the cession of Heligoland, the island commanding the Elbe estuary which Great Britain took from Denmark in 1807 as a prize of war and was secured by the Treaty of Kiel in 1814. On May 17th Count Münster informed Lord Granville that Bismarck was wishful to construct a canal connecting the North Sea with the Baltic, and hinted that as Heligoland would be the necessary key to such a plan its reversion to Germany was greatly to be desired. "It was a place of no importance to us in its present state, whereas it would be of immense importance to Germany, to ourselves, and the whole world, if it was made into a

good harbour of refuge. This would be an expensive work for us to undertake. We could not be expected to go to such expense, whereas Germany would be quite ready to undertake it. Prince Bismarck wished to cut a canal into the Baltic, which also would be a great advantage to us, as the most powerful maritime nation of the world. But Heligoland, which, of course, would be always open to our ships, would be a necessary key to such a plan."

The idea that Heligoland might one day have to change hands had already occurred to Lord Granville himself. He relates that twelve years before he had consulted the War Office and the Admiralty as to the strategical value of the island for England, and that while the War Office was indifferent, the Admiralty was strongly convinced of its importance. Now he discreetly professed surprise at Bismarck's proposal, but did not commit himself to an opinion one way or the other, and it was understood that for the present the matter should be allowed to simmer. Nevertheless, an untoward question had been opened.

In the complicated political situation then existing considerations of policy weighed at least equally with those of equity in deciding the attitude of the British Government. On June 17th the Colonial Office by telegraph forbade the Cape Government to adopt any further measure in regard to Angra Pequena, and on the 21st the German ambassador was informed that the British Cabinet had decided to acknowledge the German protectorate. Later, Germany extended her sovereignty to the frontier of Angola, with the exception of Whale Bay, and this further claim was likewise recognized. Even now, however, when it had decided to give way, the Foreign Office succeeded in doing a wise thing in an unwise way. As Germany was already in possession of Angra Pequena, it would at least have been prudent to have made a virtue of necessity and accepted the situation gracefully. Instead of so doing, the Foreign Office on July 19th, with as little knowledge of Bismarck, as before, formally notified its willingness to acknowledge German sovereignty, subject to the condition that Germany would give an undertaking not to establish a penal settlement on the coast. Seeing that the transportation of law-breakers to the colonies was a British notion, though then for some years abandoned, the demand, to say the least, showed a singular want of tact.

Bismarck gave just the answer which the Foreign Office would presumably have given in the same circumstances. After recalling the fact that the German Government had already given verbal assurances that it had no intention to establish penal settlements, he described as "extraordinary" the proposal to impose upon Germany conditions as to how she should exercise her own rights. He refused to give the undertaking sought, since he did not recognize England's title to ask for it. On September 22nd the British Government finally accepted the German annexation unconditionally, and received no thanks for a surrender which might just as well have been made magnanimously more than a year before, with lasting benefit to the two countries concerned. Lord Granville had forgotten that wise maxim of his predecessor, Lord Clarendon, "When people dare not say 'No' they had better say 'Yes' with a good grace." At this time the Fiji question was also settled according to Germany's wish, for a mixed commission was at last appointed to consider the claims which Bismarck had been pressing for ten years.

Just before this (September 17th) the Cape Government had sent home a final protest that "no weight has been attached to the wishes of the colony with regard to the coast line from the Orange River northward, notwithstanding the offer of the colony to undertake all responsibility and cost in connection with the coast." It also urged the Government to annex the remaining unappropriated portions (i.e. the fertile interior) of Damaraland and Namaqualand, a suggestion to which Lord Derby discreetly replied (November 11th) that "it would not be in accordance with international comity to annex the territory immediately adjacent to the existing German limits."

In a letter of December 4th to Sir Hercules Robinson, Lord Derby did his utmost to pacify wounded colonial feeling, and now stated frankly that to have further pressed a claim to the South-west Coast and its hinterland would have been unjustifiable. He reminded the Governor that the dispute related to "a strip of territory to which the Queen of England had no sufficient legal title, and in which German trading and missionary interests were apparently more considerable than those of her own subjects. Great Britain, which already possesses large tracts of unoccupied territory, could not fairly grudge to a friendly Power a country difficult of development, with regard to which it might have been said that we had never thought it worth

acquiring until it seemed to be wanted by our neighbour." Germany's first acquisition gave her an empire of over 300,000 square miles.

Deep and widespread resentment was caused in Germany by the attitude of the British Government, and the colonial movement immediately won hosts of ardent friends in circles which hitherto had been either indifferent or hostile to it. In a speech in the Diet Bismarck charged Great Britain with unparalleled egoism in claiming in Africa all territories which other Powers had not appropriated, again protested scornfully against the notion of England setting up a Monroe Doctrine in relation to that continent, and administered to the Foreign Office the severest reproach which could be made by one Government against another in the words: "We have not been fairly treated by England."

The unfavourable impression created by the behaviour of the Foreign Office – its unbusinesslike delays, its prevarications, and finally the belated counter-claim to a sovereignty which beforetime had been explicitly disavowed – was not confined to Germany. In England, too, there were those who felt that British diplomacy had not been shown at its best, and that the parliamentary head of the Foreign Office, himself the soul of honour, reasonableness, and suavity, had given way too much to the mute, invisible Palmerstons of his permanent staff, in comparison with whom all but the strongest and most independent-minded of Foreign Secretaries are as reeds shaken in the wind.

The events in South-west Africa were the signal for a general scramble for territory in a continent which was now ceasing, far too suddenly for its own good or for the peace of the world, to be a dark patch on the map, and to give scope merely for scientific expedition and missionary enterprise. German agents were already busy on all parts of the east coast and far in the interior, and now they began to extend their attentions to the north-west. The ambitious Lüderitz came near to repeating on the east coast the same success which he had achieved on the west. The project for the peaceful penetration and ultimate absorption of the Transvaal by Germany, which had been pressed upon Bismarck unsuccessfully in 1876, was now revived in another form. Negotiations of a more or less formal character were carried on between German agents and the Transvaal Government. They went so far, indeed, that a Boer deputation visited Berlin and

was accorded an almost royal reception. The idea was seriously entertained that Germany should conclude a treaty with the Transvaal under which German emigration should be diverted to that country; closer relationships were to be left to settle themselves, and it was part of the design that a company should acquire Delagoa Bay or St. Lucia Bay, the one in Portuguese territory and the other in Zululand (as yet not under British protection), and build a railway from the coast direct to Pretoria. Lüderitz was also scheming to gain for Germany Pondoland, the neck of territory running inland between Cape Colony and Natal, and he had been prospecting in Mashonaland, in the interior.

At that time the future of British dominion in South Africa hung in the balance, and a turn of the scales might have changed the course of world-history. It was clearly the hope of Germany's agents to drive a wedge far inland from the east coast, so wrecking the dream of a composite Brito-Dutch empire. In regard to Delagoa Bay there was little danger, since Great Britain had obtained from Portugal a right of pre-emption in respect of it when in 1875 the territory was awarded to that Power as the result of arbitration. Zululand, however, was only lost to German influence by a miscarriage of plans. While Lüderitz was still negotiating with Dinizulu with a view to the establishment of a protectorate over the country, the British Government interposed, and on December 18, 1884, the British flag was hoisted at St. Lucia Bay. Almost simultaneously Sir Charles Warren detected the German-Boer plans in Bechuanaland and frustated them. Early in 1885 he ejected the Boers who had trekked into the country and annexed the entire territory to the British Crown.

One result of the first class with British interests was that Bismarck's later colonial aims were not pursued so openly as in the case of Angra Pequena, and well-founded irritation was caused in England by the circumstances in which Germany acquired her next foothold in Africa. Here, again, the British Government was guilty of procrastination and want of foresight. On April 20, 1884, the Foreign Office was asked to give assistance to an expedition to West Africa which was to be undertaken on behalf of the German Government by Dr. Nachtigal. The communication made to Lord Granville was to the effect that Dr. Nachtigal had been instructed to "complete the information now in the possession of the Foreign Office in Berlin on

the state of German commerce on that coast," and to "conduct on behalf of the Imperial Government negotiations connected with certain questions."

The latter words aroused no suspicion at the Foreign Office, and the desired courtesies were accordingly shown. When the British Government later told the story of the movements of the Nachtigal expedition, it claimed that it had for some time been preparing to annex the Cameroons. Nevertheless, official action to that end does not appear to have been expedited on the receipt of the German message: the Consul accredited to the Cameroons country was then absent on leave, and a month passed before he was directed to return to his post.

The instructions (dated May 19th) actually given to Dr. Nachtigal gave the first place to the acquisition in the name of the Empire of territory between the Niger delta and Gaboon, particularly the portions opposite the island of Fernando Po, in the Bay of Biafra, west from the mouth of the Cameroons River as far as Cape St. John; but Little Popo was also to be visited with the same aim in view. Nachtigal arrived off the west coast early in July, and promptly annexed Togoland and thereafter the Cameroons.

When later in the month the British Consul, Mr. Hewett – whose despatch to the scene had been delayed by haggling at the Treasury over his expenses – arrived on the Cameroons River the German flag had been hoisted for five days. Nevertheless, he was still in time to secure for Great Britain Victoria, in Ambos Bay (where the English Baptists had been settled since 1858), and other minor points, and later he proclaimed a protectorate over the still unclaimed coastline from the Rio del Rey to Lagos, including the Niger delta and the Oil Rivers. Bismarck had unquestionably engaged in sharp practice, and he admitted it, but pleaded in excuse that the Angra Pequena episode had taught him that his only chance of securing these desirable possessions lay in keeping his design secret until it had been executed. It was even made a grievance in Germany that the British Consul had prevented this colonial orchard, which had literally been planted and grown by English gardeners, from being further pilfered.

On the other hand, feeling in England was irate, and the Government was blamed at least as much as the astute German Chancellor. Lord Granville wrote at a later date (January 20, 1885)

that if his Government had known that Dr. Nachtigal was bent on annexation it "would have exchanged opinions with the German Government, which must have prevented the present state of things": in other words, had he suspected that a raid upon the stable was intended he would assuredly have locked the door. Public resentment was increased when the fact came to light that though the chiefs of the Cameroons had since 1879 been pressing for British protection their appeals had been disregarded. It was in vain that Lord Granville pleaded that the Government had intended to annex the country and would have done so had Germany only given it time; the only fact about which the public cared was that it had not done so, though there had been ample opportunity and justification. The boundaries of Togoland and the Cameroons as permanently fixed gave to these protectorates an area of 30,000 and 191,000 square miles respectively.

By this time Bismarck had formally accepted his new mission of colonial empire-builder, and for a man of his combative nature to meet with resistance meant to go forward all the more resolutely. Nevertheless, he still clung to the idea that Germany should colonize in her own way and not like the older nations. In a speech in the Diet on June 26, 1884, reviewing the progress already made, he had laid down clearly the aims which he had in view. He had no intention of colonizing with Germans; he conceived of protectorates given up to plantation and trading settlements worked with native labour, with German planters and merchants at the head, and with no more bureaucratic administration than could be avoided. He had in mind the early English merchant adventurers; the Empire was to secure for its traders suitable fields of operations, and then to leave them as far as possible to their own devices.

Before the year 1884 was out British susceptibilities were again excited by German activity in the Western Pacific. From the middle of the century, and in some cases from an earlier date, German firms had had trading stations and factories in all the important groups of islands in that region, and it has been stated that the acquisition of part of New Guinea was one of the projects put forward most persistently by the earlier imperialists in the course of their propagandism for the colonial movement. The Dutch had already obtained the western portion of this island, while British influence was

represented by a land company to which its Government had granted a charter in November, 1881. Ever since the premature proposal of the Berlin bankers of 1880 the Governments of Australia had urgently implored the Colonial Office in London to annex without delay all that was still unappropriated of the island, and failing to move it, the Queensland Ministry in April, 1883, annexed the eastern part of the island on its own account, an act repudiated by the Imperial Government as both *ultra vires* and impolitic. Nevertheless, in December of the same year an intercolonial convention, meeting at Sydney, adopted resolutions in favour of the annexation by Great Britain of all New Guinea (except where the Dutch already had rights) and the adjacent islands, and also declaring that the further acquisition by any other Power of territory in the Western Pacific south of the Equator would be highly detrimental to the security and well-being of the British possessions in Australasia.

In Germany these resolutions were interpreted as tantamount to the declaration of another Monroe Doctrine in favour of Great Britain in the Pacific, and they led to protests both there and amongst Germans settled in the South Seas, who, remembering Fiji, promptly claimed the protection of their Government. At this juncture the financial *consortium* formed the New Guinea Company, and in May despatched an agent with a well-equipped expedition to the island with instructions to acquire such territories as were unappropriated on the North-east Coast and in the New Britain Archipelago. Simultaneously (June 27th) the German Government was requested to give to the prospective possessions of the Company imperial protection, and this was promised.

The Colonial Cabinets were already in communication with the home Government with a view to the annexation of the south coast. Now they wanted for Australia all that was left beyond the Dutch territory. Once more feeling ran high in both countries, and the position became for a time critical owing to a division in the British Cabinet, one section, represented by the Prime Minister and the Foreign and Colonial Secretaries, favouring a fair division between Great Britain and Germany, another being opposed to compromise.

The New Guinea episode, following so closely upon the Angra Pequena and Cameroons disputes, marked the climax of a crescendo of misunderstanding and ill-feeling between the two nations. Than

Bismarck no modern statesman was readier to fight for what he conceived to be his country's rights, or had a keener appreciation of the principle of reciprocity; and he was, no doubt, honestly persuaded at that time that Great Britain intended to pursue a dog-in-the-manger policy in relation to German colonization and would carry that policy just as far as she dare with impunity. To a representative of the British Colonial Office who had an interview with him on December 24, 1884, he confessed keen disappointment that Great Britain should have sought to obstruct Germany in the Pacific as she had done in Africa. "He said that we had immense possessions in that part of the world, that we had already more land than we could colonize for years to come, . . . and that it was not worthy of us to grudge Germany a settlement on the coast of New Guinea, separated from Australia by the islands and the south shore which we had taken." He added that "up to two years ago he had done everything he could to facilitate British policy in Egypt and elsewhere, but for some time past he has been treated in a different manner by England, whose actions do not accord with her professions."

Resentful at the obstructive spirit which he had to encounter, he now for once put away all restraint, and the political Press, taking its cue as ever from Ministerial hints, did its best to fan the fires of national ire. It was unfortunate for Great Britain that at that critical time she lost by death (August 25th) the services in Berlin of Lord Ampthill (Lord Odo Russell), who had been ambassador to the German Court for thirteen years and had been on terms of exceptional friendship with the fastidious Chancellor. Russell was apt to hold too tenaciously to opinions once formed, yet if he failed, as he certainly did, to keep abreast of the march of the colonial movement in Germany or the change in the German Government's attitude towards it, he was able to exercise a moderating influence upon the official relations of the two countries at a time of special difficulty. Often Bismarck reposed in him confidences which did not fall to other members of the Diplomatic Corps, and if when the London Foreign Office showered upon him its interminable despatches he at times made the British ambassador the vent of his ill-humours, the cordial *rapport* between the two was advantageous for both countries.

Towards the end of the year Bismarck published a collection of despatches – a new departure in German Foreign Office usage – telling

the story of the colonial acquisitions and the accompanying disputes, whereupon the British Foreign Office, in self-justification, published a White Paper covering the same ground. Early in 1885 Bismarck followed with a series of inflammatory speeches in the Diet, in which he laid to the charge of the British Government an accumulation of wrongs sufficient, if true, to have justified any measure of reproach. Soreness over the colonial question was increased by grievances of a more personal kind, and because he spoke under aggravation he spoke neither wisely nor well. A charge that a certain despatch to the German Government had been published in a Blue-book before it reached his hands appears to have been true, and the rebuke which the indiscretion received may have been deserved. The worst of his grievances, however, were imaginary, and the worst of his accusations unfounded. He alleged that English consular officers, missionaries, and traders in the Cameroons had incited the natives to rebellion, yet failed to produce a particle of evidence to support the charge. He made it a grievance that an English corvette had omitted to salute the German flag in Cameroons waters, although its captain had had no notification of the new protectorate. He went so far as to charge the Foreign Office with having neglected to reply to an important despatch – the despatch which, as subsequent inquiry showed, Bismarck at the last moment had countermanded.

Still more Bismarck took offence because Lord Granville had represented him as having advised the British Government to occupy Egypt. He denied having given any such advice – at least, he added, without reference to existing treaties. Lord Granville, with a restraint which was misunderstood in Germany, accepted the disavowal and explained that Bismarck's words must have been misunderstood. Nevertheless, that the advice had been given cannot be doubted, though it may not have been discreet to disclose the fact. But the crowning sin of the British Foreign Office was that it had sent him during the preceding summer no fewer than 128 despatches, containing between 700 and 800 pages. "During all the twenty-three years I have been a Minister," he said, "we have not received so many from all the other Governments together" (March 2, 1885).

Bismarck did not stop at ill-humour and hard words. His resentment against England coloured his relationships towards other countries, and particularly France and Russia. During 1884 Germany's

attitude towards France improved just in the measure that her attitude towards England became strained, and France was all the readier to welcome Bismarck's advances since England had lost popularity in that quarter as well. For some years it had been his policy to support the Republic from a belief that the republican form of government would disqualify France from being the ally of monarchies. Now he took up the attitude of the disinterested and generous friend who sought only his neighbour's good. It was said that at that time he was the most popular man in Paris. He was able to tell the Diet on January 10, 1885: "With France we have not for many years – I may truly say since the time before 1866 – been on so good a footing as now. This is due to the wise and moderate government in France, which values the blessings of peace as highly as we do." It was also due, in some degree at least, to the shadow which had been cast upon Anglo-French relationships by the Egyptian question, and to the susceptibility of the Ferry Ministry to German attentions. Bismarck, as we have seen, had threatened that if England refused to assist his colonial schemes he would turn to France. This he did, and the first tangible result was the wrecking of the Anglo-Portuguese treaty relating to the Congo which had been concluded in the previous February and thereafter submitted to the judgment of the Powers. However tainted his motives in this episode may have been, the results were unquestionably of great advantage to Central Africa and to civilization. By this treaty Great Britain had agreed to recognize Portugal's claim to the mouth of the Congo, as defined, while Portugal in return undertook to give equal treatment to the subjects of all nations travelling or residing therein, to maintain the river as a free waterway, subject to strictly limited dues, to co-operate with Great Britain in suppressing the slave trade, and to grant to that country certain contingent territorial concessions. The British Government wished the river to be regulated by an international commission, but to this Portugal objected, and the treaty accordingly proposed to set up an Anglo-Portuguese commission to execute the provisions of the treaty.

It has been suggested that on the part of Lord Granville this agreement was, in spirit and purpose, a measure of retaliation upon Bismarck and Germany. Not only is the suggestion refuted by the fact that the negotiations leading to the treaty were opened before Germany had claimed territory in Africa or anywhere else, but it does

not harmonize in the least with Lord Granville's straightforward character. The assumption that an agreement of such magnitude could be arbitrarily concluded by two Powers without any consultation with the rest of the world may surprise the present generation, but there is no justification whatever for doubting that Lord Granville acted in perfect good faith, while there is clear documentary evidence that he endeavoured so to frame the treaty as to justify the hope that the other Powers would be able to accept it without difficulty. During the negotiations he had never concealed from the Portuguese Government his view that the Governments were not engaged in a merely dual arrangement, and that if an agreement was to ensue it must be one which the other Powers would be willing to accept. "It is obvious," he wrote on March 15, 1883, "that there could be no advantage in concluding a treaty which would not be accepted by other Powers whose acceptance would be indispensable before it could come into operation."

No sooner did the terms of the treaty become known than protests were raised on all sides, and Bismarck made himself the spokesman of the opposition, declaring roundly that arrangements so far-going, made over the heads of the other European Powers, could not be allowed to stand. It was in vain that Lord Granville pointed out (June 30th) that fourteen years before, during the Franco-Prussian War, Germany had already recognized Portugal's sovereign rights in the Lower Congo region, that but for Great Britain those rights would long ago have been asserted more positively, and that the proposed treaty subjected them to important limitations. Bismarck refused to recognize a transaction in which he had had no part, and the treaty was abandoned. Portugal had suggested an international conference, and he appropriated that idea.

Instead of consulting the British Government as to how the idea should be developed, he now approached the Ferry Cabinet and proposed that Germany and France should take the question in hand. During August, Baron de Courcel, the French ambassador, was with Bismarck at Varzin, and there the basis of the proposed conference was agreed upon. With scant courtesy, without prior consultation of any kind, Bismarck in October informed the British Foreign Office of the proposal of the German and French Governments to call the Powers together and asked whether it would be willing to cooperate.

Only on request did he vouchsafe the information that the conference was intended to deliberate upon the questions of freedom of commerce in the Congo river territories, freedom of navigation on the Congo and the Niger, and the conditions under which new annexations on the coast of Africa were in future to be considered effective. An invitation given in these circumstances was mortifying, yet after satisfying himself by further inquiry that the Powers were not to be asked simply to ratify an agreement already drawn up, but that all would enter the conference free and unpledged, Lord Granville fell in with the proposal, upon which the conference was convened jointly by Germany and France.

In spite of its unpromising origin the Congo conference was a great success and its results were beneficial for the future of a large part of the African continent. Plenipotentiaries of thirteen European Powers (including the International Association of the Congo) and the United States met in Berlin from November 15th to February 26th following, and Bismarck both opened and closed the deliberations, but took no other direct part. The decisions of the conference were embodied in the General Act of February 26, 1885, which enacted freedom of trade in the Congo basin (as defined), prohibited the slave trade and the transit of slaves in the Congo territories, provided for the neutrality of these territories in case of war, introduced the principle of free navigation on the Congo and Niger, allowed the levying of river dues for administrative purposes only, laid down the conditions on which future annexations on the coasts of Africa should be deemed to be effective, and made provision for the territories coming under the Act remaining neutral in the event of any Power exercising sovereignty therein being at war.

France worked hand in hand with Germany throughout the proceedings, and for reward came out of the conference with an enlarged Congo territory; Portugal obtained some approximation to the frontiers at the mouth of the Congo which she had claimed; while the African International Association, King Leopold of Belgium's private enterprise, now became known as the Free Congo State, and as such received general recognition from the Powers of Europe, following Germany's lead. The Act thus left the Congo basin under the sovereignty of three States as before. From the conference Great Britain and Germany derived no territorial gain, nor yet special

advantages of any kind. The former had, on the whole, no reason to be dissatisfied with the results, for the principle of the “open door” for which she had always contended was asserted and she was left with a now acknowledged supremacy in the Lower Niger. The principal gain to Germany, next to the security of equal treatment offered to her trade, was that the part played by her in this first great colonial conference of the Powers brought her into the full current of colonial politics.

At the closing session Bismarck used words which just thirty years later were to acquire a sombre significance.

“The special conditions in which you have opened up wide tracts of territory to commercial enterprise,” he said, “have required special guarantees for the preservation of peace and public order. The evils of war would assume a specially fatal character if the natives were led to take sides in disputes between the civilized Powers. After careful consideration of the dangers which might attend such contingencies, in the interests of commerce and civilization you have sought to devise means to withdraw a large part of the African continent from the oscillations of general politics, and to confine the rivalry of nations therein to the peaceful pursuits of trade and industry.”

The friction between Germany and Great Britain might have continued indefinitely had not an event occurred which abruptly disturbed Bismarck’s calculations. The Ferry Cabinet, discredited by the disastrous Tonquin adventure, was tottering to its fall – the end came on March 30, 1885, owing to a hostile vote of the House of Deputies – and it was ever Bismarck’s way to make sure of new friends before he cast off the old. The imminence of a reactionary Government in France, with the consequent uncertainty of his prospects there, sobered him and recalled him to the world of realities. Was France, after all, so certain a friend that he should desire to make England a certain enemy? On reflection he decided not, and the near event showed that his second thoughts were better than his first, for within a year came the Cabinet of M. Freycinet, bringing into prominence General Boulanger and new schemes of revenge.

Only a few days after the most violent of his parliamentary speeches on England’s perfidy the political world heard with wonder that the Chancellor had again sent his son, Count Herbert, to London on a special mission, charged with power to adjust the outstanding

causes of friction. The British Cabinet was still divided on the question of no surrender or compromise on the question of New Guinea, and it was due to Mr. Gladstone's dominating influence that resistance was offered to the pressure of Australian opinion, too far removed from the centre of disturbance to appreciate the danger which surrender to it might have involved. For him foreign politics mattered more than colonial, and the question of Egypt transcended in importance that of New Guinea. Assured, therefore, that Germany would make no trouble on the Nile if Great Britain was accommodating in the Pacific, he threw his influence strongly on the side of accommodation.1 Writing to Lord Granville on March 6th, the day after a talk on the absorbing question with Count Herbert Bismarck, who had told him that there could be no cause of quarrel between Germany and Great Britain "nearer home" (i.e. in Egypt) if the British Government were friendly on the colonial question, Mr. Gladstone said: "I do hope that you are pressing forward the Pauncefote settlement of the North Coast of New Guinea, which seems to me the main or only point remaining. It is really impossible to exaggerate the importance of getting out of the way the bar to the Egyptian settlement. These words, strong as they are, are in my opinion words of truth and soberness; as, if we cannot wind up at once these small colonial controversies, we shall before we are many weeks older find it to our cost."

An understanding favourable to German claims was arrived at; Bismarck was appeased; and while he hastened to relieve the tension of public opinion in Germany, the British Premier and Foreign Secretary sealed the pact of peace by conciliatory speeches from their places in Parliament.

"There appears to be a suspicion in Germany," Lord Granville said (March 6th), "that we do not give full recognition of the present position of that great nation. I believe, on the contrary, that there is no country in which not only politicians but all classes of the population appreciate more and with greater pleasure the important position which Germany has taken in Europe since its unification."

Mr. Gladstone endorsed his colleague's utterances a few days later (March 12th) in the House of Commons in memorable words. After stating that if the countermanded despatch of May 5, 1884, had been communicated to his Government it would have received the friendly attention which it deserved, the orator added: "If Germany is to

become a colonizing Power, all I say is, 'God speed her!' She becomes our ally and partner in the execution of the great purposes of Providence for the advantage of mankind." Germany at that moment was not thinking so much of the purposes of Providence and the advantage of mankind as of new markets for her merchandise, yet the words evoked in that country a warm response.

In its final form the New Guinea agreement (April 25th- 29th) gave to Germany a larger slice of the island than she had expected or perhaps could reasonably have claimed. She was assigned the northern portion between 141° of latitude east and 8° of longitude south, with half of the unexplored interior, and all the islands lying off the north coast, while the south of the island and the narrow eastern end went to Great Britain. German New Guinea was renamed Kaiser Wilhelms-Land. The New Britain islands – henceforth called Bismarck Archipelago – also remained with Germany. A further addition of some 90,000 square miles was thus made to her quickly acquired colonial empire.

Unquestionably the colonial rivalries of those days dislocated and disharmonised the relations between Germany and Great Britain for a long time. It is possible, and even probable, that they contained the germ of all later mistrust and misunderstanding. Germany never forgot that she obtained hardly one of her early protectorates without having first to overcome resistance from the British Government, and that in nearly every case this opposition was based, not upon any claim of prior occupation, but upon the tacit assumption that territories adjacent to British possessions, which had escaped appropriation, could not properly be claimed by any other country. A pretension of this kind may prove convenient for a great imperial Power so long as it passes undisputed, but when other countries challenge its equity, trouble cannot fail to arise. It is hardly too much to say that the strongest effective impulse to German colonization came from England. Bismarck had entered the field warily, haltingly, and against his will; it was only when he found himself face to face with opposition that his pugnacious spirit was aroused and he threw himself into the competition for territory, wherever it was to be found, with the joy of the combatant who loves the contest even more than the prize.

Is it possible to draw up a balance-sheet of rights and wrongs for

that first unhappy period of Anglo-German colonial contention? An attempt is worth while, since the questions and issues which provoked the discords of 1884 and 1885 became the pivot upon which British policy towards Germany swung and swayed throughout the following generation. During all that time rivalry over imperial expansion continued in one form or another, and the early misunderstandings merely proved the precursors of far deeper and acuter antipathies. It is obvious that the question whether our balance-sheet will be a fair one or not will depend almost wholly upon what is allowed to figure on the two sides of the account. Thus England did not recognize as legitimate grievances which were very real to Germany, and Germany scouted as arrogant claims which to England were so well founded as to be entirely beyond dispute. There was a difference in equation also. Thus a tract of barren territory which in Germany's eyes possessed little intrinsic value was to England a vital link in the chain of Empire. It was plain to all impartial observers that the two nations – and not only their Governments – viewed the questions at issue from different and irreconcilable standpoints; the standpoint of England being that of the early prospector who had pegged out his rich claims and resented the presence of intruding neighbours, the standpoint of Germany that of the late arriver, determined to have a fair share of what had hitherto been no-man's-land. Hence when England projected further acquisitions Germany called it greed, and when Germany set eyes on unappropriated territories England accused her of intrigue. To discover a *modus vivendi* for nations which confronted each other in such a mood was at the best no easy task, and neither the stereotyped formulas of the British Foreign Office nor the brusque ways for which the German Foreign Office had made itself famous under Bismarck's strong and masterful guidance tended to resolve misunderstandings which were due to entirely new problems and situations.

Moreover, if it was difficult for Bismarck to appreciate the embarrassed position of British statesmen, called upon suddenly, owing to inacquaintance with the course which German colonial endeavours had been following for decades, to adapt themselves to the idea that Germany was just as free to take unappropriated territories as any other State, it was no less difficult for these statesmen to strike a fair and safe compromise between the claims of the colonies and the need of remaining on amicable working terms with a Great Power

which at that time was able to make their path either rough or smooth in Egypt. Lord Granville in particular was severely handicapped, since while as Foreign Secretary he was compelled to view the political situation as a whole and to test every act of policy by its probable effect upon international relations, he was throughout the controversy pressed unduly by his colleague at the Colonial Office and by the Australian Governments, regardless of these wider and larger considerations. Bismarck himself admitted that "the sentiments towards us of Lord Granville are more benevolent than the policy of the English Colonial Office."

There were also personal differences of temperament, which were admirably reflected by the statesmen who bore the brunt of the diplomatic tourney on behalf of their countries; on the one hand, the plain blunt man Bismarck, able to give friendship or enmity as might be desired, in either case amply and heartily; on the other hand, the polished courtier Granville, typifying the dignity and restraint of the English ruling class, the guardian of the national ice-house, the Foreign Office, whose temperature might not be raised on any pretext, on pain of the melting of its frosty traditions.

In its parliamentary and public relations the history of the British Foreign Office, the most Conservative in the world, is a history of great statesmen and great gentlemen; but in the colonial controversies of 1884 and 1885 its proved and predominant traditions of strength and firmness, combined with equity and measure, were not conspicuous. Politics, and above all foreign politics, to be carried on successfully, can never be an affair of all taking on one side and no giving. The statesman who in any conflict of interest knows how long it is safe to resist and when it is wise to yield, who holds his hand when he has won enough for prudence, and is content for safety's sake to forgo the extreme advantage, is the one who invariably gains most, or at least most that is worth gaining, in the end. The golden rule of moderation in all things was not observed in the dealings of the Foreign Office with the young and rising Power which thirty years ago aspired for the first time to a place in the sun.

While, however, the major part of the blame for the disharmonies of those years must be attributed to his subordinates and to an obstinate official tradition, it must be added that Lord Granville's constitutional indisposition to face responsibility, and his propensity

for letting difficulties be settled by proxy or ignoring them altogether, were also at fault. “I see every day,” he told Lord Clarendon (January 5, 1852), just after he succeeded Lord Palmerston, “the proofs in the Foreign Office of the extraordinary ability and the little follies of my great predecessor.” But at least Lord Palmerston never feared to face responsibility, of which, as a rule, he preferred to take upon himself too much rather than too little. It was not lack of moral force, but rather intellectual inertia, that caused Lord Granville to leave important decisions to others or, what was worse, to evade them altogether. No one can study the diplomatic reports relating to these colonial disputes without coming to the conclusion that on each occasion the British case was prejudiced as much by irresolution, lack of clear purpose, and procrastination as by inherent weaknesses, though these were present.

But further, once again, as twenty years before, the British Government was not particularly well served by the watchmen on the observation towers abroad. Many years before Lord Odo Russell had formed the opinion, on information which at the time was no doubt well founded, that Bismarck did not want colonies and that the German Diet was indifferent to them, and to this opinion he clung long after circumstances had changed and the facts were entirely against him. Altogether he appears to have taken the colonial movement too lightly and, ignoring the growing force of public opinion, to have treated as a caprice what was a genuine national aspiration. Lord Lyons, in Paris, who knew little about German politics that did not filter to him through the medium of his Berlin colleague, nevertheless volunteered to Lord Granville, in the midst of his painful grappling with the perplexities of a new and thorny problem (January 20, 1885), the opinion that Bismarck’s colony schemes were “childish and founded as much on spite against England as on any real expectation of advantage to Germany” – an opinion wholly at variance with the facts, so far as relates to the genesis of the German colonial endeavours, and far below the mark of a mind so acute and usually so cautious and well balanced. It would have been more prudent to have assumed that the German Government understood its own business and was the best judge of its own policy, and Lord Granville in particular would have done well to have kept in mind his remark to Lord Odo Russell on November 27, 1873, that he did not feel “the

slightest jealousy of the Germans acquiring colonial possessions." After all, it should not have needed great foresight to convince British statesmen that a country with a prolific population, a rapidly growing maritime trade, with incipient but very decided naval ambitions, a country also which, as we have seen, had taken an important part in African exploration, would not be willing to forgo for all time a share in the unappropriated parts of the earth.

In fairness to the British Foreign Office and its head, however, it must be added that they only represented, withal in a tempered way, the hostile sentiment of the British nation at large. In the heat of a controversy which offered peculiar scope for appeal to prejudice and passion one English statesman, indeed, distinguished himself by moderation, soberness, and sound common sense: it was the statesman who a few years later was destined to voice, as no other of his day, the true imperialistic spirit of his countrymen and race. "It would be humiliating indeed," Mr. Chamberlain said at Birmingham on January 1, 1885, "if England, the mistress of half the world, were to be driven to imitate the conduct of an angry scold, and indulge in a fit of hysterical passion because Germany had snapped up some unconsidered trifles of territory which we have hitherto not thought it worth while to acquire. If it be necessary, as I think it may be, to review our foreign and colonial policy in the light of recent events, let us face the altered circumstances of the problem in the spirit of full-grown men and not with the pettish outcry of frightened children." Words of wisdom like these urgently needed saying at the time, yet they were rare. The more general attitude was that which statesmen and people had so commonly shown towards Germany for a generation. Germany's new prominence in the world was inconvenient, and it was still held to be expedient to say so frankly. It occurred to few people who held this sentiment to reflect upon its narrowness and impolicy, or to suspect the dangers which it held in store.

Virtue and vice in national as in personal characteristics tend to meet, like extremes of other kinds. Even in our later and less insular days there is always a danger of confusing imperialism with mere parochialism, the mark of which is to view the world from the standpoint of one's own opinions, feelings, and interests. There are facts and reasons enough in the history of the Anglo-Saxon race – the

courage, steadfastness, strenuousness, and passion for action which have driven it in all ages to deeds of high emprise on land and sea, its inborn love of mastery and domination, its genius for government – which alone explain why so large a part of the globe has fallen, and was destined to fall, beneath British sway. The acceptance of such a view is consistent with a generous and unselfish patriotism. It is not truly imperialistic but truly parochial, however, to pretend that it was from all time written in the stars that other nations should be shut out from a share in the mission of civilization.

The attitude maintained towards German colonial endeavours by the British Government at that time was not, of course, that of conscious cupidity; indeed, its greatest danger lay in the fact that England was shown as making unreasonable demands without knowing that they were unreasonable, or suspecting that others could so regard them. Let it be said frankly that in the colonial controversies of 1884 and 1885 England put herself in the wrong, and that Bismarck's verdict, "It was a miscalculation on England's part to disapprove of our modest colonial endeavours" (March 2, 1885) was justified. Perhaps the severest condemnation upon the British Foreign Office was passed by Lord Granville himself in a note written on February 5, 1885, to Sir Edward Malet, who had reported to him on an interview with the German Chancellor. In this note he pleaded that "the misunderstandings referred to by Prince Bismarck in his conversation with your Excellency are due to the suddenness with which her Majesty's Government became acquainted with the departure by Germany from her traditional policy in regard to colonization." The words came perilously near to a claim that the Cabinet to which Lord Granville belonged could not be expected to know that Bismarck meant what he said.

On the other hand, Bismarck cannot be acquitted of a large share of responsibility for the discords of those days. His policy was straight at the beginning, but it soon went crooked and ended so. His behaviour also, after he had become convinced that he could only make headway in colonial matters by breaking down British opposition, was far from encouraging to a nation which may be led but can never be driven. Yet if he was provocative in the highest degree, it was because he had been provoked, and it was Bismarck's rule when his enemy smote him on the right cheek to smite back on

both. We have seen that when the quarrel came to an end, so far as it did end, no warmer assurances of friendly intentions and of a desire to live peaceably with Germany were uttered on the English side than those which left the lips of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary. The misfortune was that the desire for conciliation so handsomely avowed at the end of the episode was not discovered at the beginning. If Bismarck read Charles Reade one can imagine him, as he reflected on the professions of good-will which were so tardily wrung from British Ministers, asking himself, like the gentle heroine of *The Cloister and the Hearth*, why "those sweet words" had been withheld so long.

In the further extension of her oversea dominions at that time Germany had no readier auxiliary than the British Government, whose Foreign Secretary henceforth made generous amends, by ready co-operation and deferent concession, for past opposition. While a war of despatches was raging over the acquisitions in South-west and West Africa and New Guinea an empire destined to be larger and richer than any one of these was being built in East Africa. Here there was not the same danger of a collision with the older colonial Power, though British interests of long standing existed. The Sultan of Zanzibar had from time immemorial claimed sovereignty on the mainland from Warscheik in the north to Cape Delgado in the south, and far into the interior. Various countries had entered into treaty relations with him for commercial purposes – the United States in 1835, Great Britain in 1839, France in 1844, and in 1859 the German Hanseatic cities, Hamburg, Bremen and Lübeck (the treaty in this case being transferred later to the North German Confederation and the Empire), while in 1862 Great Britain and France had formally acknowledged the Sultan's independence. For many years British influence had been supreme in Zanzibar, and in 1878 the Sultan had been willing to place his East African dominion under British protection. Though Lord Beaconsfield declined to accept the liability, much was done by British enterprise for the development of the country.

Long before Germany began to regard East Africa from the standpoint of colonization German explorers had been active there. Rebmann, the missionary, discovered the Kilimanjaro in 1848, and some years later Baron Klaus von der Decken led a luckless expedition

into the interior, where he was murdered. Later, two of von der Decken's companions, Dr. Richard Brenner and Dr. Otto Kersten, brought the country before the German public from the imperialistic standpoint, Brenner even persuading the Sultan of Witu in 1867 to ask through him the protection of the Prussian Government, which was refused.

The first practical steps towards obtaining a footing in East Africa were taken by the German Government in October, 1884, when a consul was appointed in Zanzibar in the person of Dr. Gerhard Rohlfs. This move alarmed the British Foreign Office, which invited an exchange of views, and there was relief in London when the assurance was given that Germany had no thought of establishing a protectorate there. In the meantime Dr. Karl Peters, a young and ambitious journalist and pseudo-scientist, who had become a colonial enthusiast during residence in England, had succeeded in establishing a new colonial propagandist organization, the Society for German Colonization, and from the first it devoted its attention to East Africa. Organizing an expedition, in spite of the refusal of official encouragement, Peters and his friends set foot in the country in November, and passing beyond the coast territory over which the Sultan of Zanzibar claimed suzerainty, they concluded treaties with native chiefs by which an area of 60,000 square miles came into their hands virtually as a free gift. Returning home, he formed the German East Africa Company for the exploitation of his dominion, and now the Government, which had refused to countenance Peters so long as he sought its patronage with empty hands, gave him the desired letter of protection in respect of it (February 27, 1885). Further expeditions undertaken by Peters and his friends gained for his Company still larger tracts of territory in Swaheliland, Somaliland, both the coast and the interior, and elsewhere. The sultanate of Witu was also placed under the Empire's protection.

Most of these acquisitions were obtained in clear infraction of the suzerain rights of the Sultan of Zanzibar, who protested in vain both to the German Emperor and the British Government. When, however, the Sultan sent troops into the interior to enforce his authority, a German squadron was sent to Zanzibar to overawe him, and in the end, on the advice of the British Government, he withdrew both his protests and his men, and acknowledged the German claims (August

14th). Sir John Kirk, who had been the British representative in Zanzibar for twenty years, earnestly remonstrated with his Government, but, having made peace with Bismarck, Lord Granville was in no mind for further difficulties.

In the meantime an English financial group, the British East Africa Association, had entered the field, and was interesting itself in projects for developing certain territories between the coast and the lakes. It became necessary, therefore, to delimit the adjacent spheres of influence, and this was ultimately done by a boundary agreement of October 29-November 1, 1886, which gave to Germany the coastline between the rivers Umba in the north and Rovuma in the south, and left her in possession of the Kilimanjaro region, Uganda, and Witu. The Sultan's authority was whittled down to a shadow of his ancient claims; but he was helpless, and accordingly he accepted the terms of his powerful neighbours without demur at the end of the year. The agreement was one of a series of colonial arrangements concluded with Germany by Lord Salisbury, who had in the meantime succeeded Lord Granville (June, 1885). Bismarck would have welcomed any change of Government which promised a new start, but the accession to power of Lord Salisbury, whom he knew from the time of the Berlin Congress, gave him special satisfaction. Throughout this, the first Salisbury administration and the second, which lasted from August, 1886, to August, 1892, the relations of the two countries were consistently cordial, and on the whole Germany secured the best of the subsequent territorial bargaining.

Nevertheless, East Africa was not yet to have settled peace. In 1888 the German protectorate was thrown into insurrection owing to the indiscretions of Peters and other agents of his Company, and the measures taken by Germany and Great Britain jointly for the suppression of the slave trade in their territories led to a widespread rising of the Arabs under the chief Bushiri, which lasted until the beginning of 1891. Meanwhile, Bismarck, who had become thoroughly distrustful of Peters, placed the colony more directly under the Empire's control, and from 1889 it was administered by an imperial commissioner. In the following year the Company surrendered its suzerain rights to the Empire for the sum of £1,350,000, and German influence in East Africa was consolidated by the purchase from the Sultan of Zanzibar for £200,000 of an extensive

strip of territory on the coast. Peters was at this time engaged in another expedition, as a result of which he concluded with native chiefs many new treaties which, had they been valid and duly enforced, would have greatly circumscribed British influence in the interior, and diverted much of the trade of the Upper Nile into German territory. Unfortunately for his plans, however, in Peters's absence the German and British Governments had entered into new negotiations regarding their position and claims in East Africa, and when the traveller returned to civilization he heard, to his chagrin, that the resulting agreement, bearing date July 1, 1890, had made short work of his ambitious schemes. By it the spheres of interest of the contracting Powers were determined in such manner that Germany's empire was broadly confined within the limits imposed by Portuguese Mozambique in the south, the Lakes Nyassa, Tanganyika, and Victoria in the east, and the territory running from the river Wanga through (and including) the Kilimanjaro region to Lake Victoria in the north. A fairly compact empire of 384,000 square miles was thus formed. Great Britain secured Uganda, Witu, and also the protectorate of Zanzibar and Pemba. Territorial adjustments of a minor character were arranged in South-west and West Africa. As a crowning return for Germany's concessions Lord Salisbury ceded to her the island of Heligoland. The agreement gave general satisfaction in neither country. In Germany in particular the colonial party professed to regard the acquisition of Heligoland as insufficient to counterbalance the loss of German rights in Zanzibar and Witu, the truth being that at that time of short views on both sides Germany as little recognized how much she had potentially gained as Great Britain how much she had lost by the transfer of the Elbe island.

One other series of acquisitions, of minor extent and importance, fell to 1885, the red-letter year of German colonial history. They comprised several groups of small islands in the Western Pacific, and in relation to one of them Germany came into serious conflict with Spain. On August 6th of that year the Berlin Foreign Office informed the Government in Madrid that it intended to annex the Caroline and Pelew Islands, on the assumption that they were unappropriated. Spain protested on the ground of prior possession, and in a race of ships of war to the Carolines Germany succeeded in hoisting her flag first on the island of Jap. After angry recrimination on both sides the

dispute was referred to the Pope for settlement, and he proposed (October 22nd) a compromise by which Spain was to exercise sovereignty over the islands, but Germany was to have a naval station and equal trading rights, an arrangement accepted by both countries in December. (In 1889 these islands were purchased from Spain for £800,- 000.) In the same year the Marshall, Brown, and Providence islands, and some of the Solomon islands were annexed by Germany without protest. A little later began that persistent assertion of German influence in the Samoan islands which in 1899 brought Savaii and Upolu into her permanent possession in virtue of agreements with Great Britain and the United States, thus ending a long period of *condominium* which had lamentably failed to give to Samoa order and good government.

References to colonial developments of later date must be reserved for the chapters in which domestic affairs generally are surveyed.

Although Bismarck's principal colonial difficulties were with Great Britain, his acquisitions of territory were not made without frequent struggles against parliamentary opposition at home. The practical culmination of the colonial movement had created a wave of enthusiasm in the country; a host of societies, old and new, were busily engaged in successful propagandism; German traders and financiers were investing large amounts of capital in the new ventures; only in the Diet was a hearty response wanting. There parties refused to judge the question on its merits, and insisted in confusing it with other issues. There was a strong group of ardent imperialists, but up to this point no party had completely identified itself with the colonial movement from settled conviction. The Conservatives voted for the acquisition of colonies rather out of loyalty to the Government than from any clear belief that Germany would be better for them. The Radicals and Socialists opposed them, not because they were on principle anti-Ministerialists, though that was the case, but on the ground of expense and risk. The National Liberals gave only a half-hearted support, while the rest of the parties were still rather unsympathetic than otherwise.

Thus it happened that three bills had to be introduced before Bismarck could obtain in 1885 a vote for subsidies to mail steamship companies, to ensure regular sailings to some of the outposts of Greater Germany. The first vote was for £250,000, an amount which

was later doubled. Yet it was this outlay which made possible the commercial invasion of the British colonial empire by Germany and also the establishment of a penny post between that country and Australia twenty years before the mother country took the same step. It was made a condition that the ships to be so subsidized should have been built in German yards, and should both be quicker and charge lower fares and rates than existing vessels.

Bismarck resented the apathy of a Diet which was neither hot nor cold. He complained bitterly that it was unfair to expect him to carry out large schemes of colonial enterprise and at the same time to spend his time and energies in disputations with reluctant deputies on the question of finance. He held that any fair distribution of labour required that if he provided the colonies Parliament should at least provide the necessary funds, and do it willingly. Discouraged and depressed by the want of loyal support at a time when he was doing his best to build up the Empire at home and abroad, the ageing Chancellor, in one of the most moving of all his parliamentary speeches (March 2, 1885), lamented "the old, hereditary Ger man enemy, the spirit of party strife, which finds sustenance in dynastic, confessional, and racial differences and in political struggles," and added: "The analogy of our German history with our German mythology is something that has troubled and disquieted me unceasingly during the last twenty years. There is in our national mythology a peculiar anticipation of the fact that as often as things go well with Germany the Loki is never missing who finds his Hödur, a weak-minded, stupid being, whom he artfully induces to blight the national springtime."

The constitutional position of the colonies was in the early years laid down by a law of 1886, since amended several times, which empowered the Emperor to exercise the executive power in the protected territories in the name of the Empire, of which the colonies were declared to be "oversea provinces." For a long time the affairs of the colonies were regulated in the main by Ministerial decrees and orders, greatly to the dissatisfaction of the political parties at home, which were jealous of their parliamentary powers. With the continual increase of the colonial estimates, however, it became year by year easier for the Diet to assert its wish for a more direct share in the government of Greater Germany in the way of legislation and free

discussion. Several important questions, however, were from the first subject to imperial legislation, e.g. civil law, criminal law, judicial procedure, marriage law, the exercise of religious liberties, and finance.

It had been Bismarck's fixed intention that the protectorates should be administered by chartered companies formed on the British model, the Empire affording protection where necessary, but interfering as little as possible in the work of government and development. This system was, in fact, followed in the early years, but in course of time it broke down completely in the face of unforeseen contingencies. One of these was the financial difficulties with which the early colonial companies, with hardly a single exception, had to struggle from the beginning. These companies freely acquired large undeveloped territories, without considering the character and extent of the liabilities which their possession was likely to impose upon them. The consequence was that they had as a rule exhausted their funds before they had fairly faced their tasks. Companies so situated were ill fitted to take over the important function of administration. Viewing the colonies only or chiefly from the commercial side, the merchant adventurers, the "Hanseatics," and financiers, organized in their companies and syndicates, showed little desire and less aptitude for delicate work of that kind. Long before Bismarck gave place to a successor, therefore, it had become evident that the Empire would have to face the duty and cost of colonial government.

Nor did the record of imperial administration itself prove for a long time a successful one, for this was for Germany a voyage in uncharted waters. Perhaps failures were in the circumstances inevitable, yet they were made the more certain owing to insufficient care in the choice of the men sent out. Many of these were men of the wrong type – wrong in training and character, and often still more wrong in morals. Bismarck had once expressed the fear that to establish an imperial colonial bureaucracy might be to pack it with "questionable existences." Of doubtful characters the colonial service had far too many in the early years, and the result was wholesale misrule, abuse, corruption, and demoralization, which gave the colonial empire a bad name and for a long time seriously prejudiced the colonial movement altogether. Partly owing to the sudden change from the rude but familiar discipline of chieftain rule to the trammels

of organized government on drastic and mechanical principles, yet also to systematic and often revolting ill-usage, serious native insurrections impeded the development of all the African colonies in the early years, and the retaliation which followed was always swift and severe. In particular, the explorer Peters, who later entered the colonial service, was said to have left a trail of blood wherever he went. Not a few administrators, even officials of the highest rank, were, like him, prosecuted for cruelty or immorality and dismissed the service.

Gradually the chaff in the colonial service was sifted from the corn; greater circumspection was shown in the choice of men, and in time the service began to attract a higher type of official, free from the degrading tradition that codes of morality apply only in civilized countries, though his antithesis never entirely disappeared. During the early years the general administration of the colonies came directly under the Foreign Office as part of its routine work. In 1890 a special colonial department of that Ministry was created, with a Colonial Director at its head, subject to the Imperial Chancellor, and it is significant of the economical methods practised in the German civil service that the change was carried out at an extra cost of £1,200 a year. The new department was given the assistance of a colonial council, a sort of advisory committee composed of representatives of colonial undertakings and religious missions and experts on colonial questions.

BISMARCK - THE LAST PHASE, 1888-1890

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IN 1888 THE THRONE of Imperial Germany was held by three occupants, of whom two passed away within the short space of a hundred days. The first Emperor had reached the ripe age of ninety-one years, thus exceeding by twenty-five and twenty-one years the age at which his immediate predecessors on the throne of Prussia, his brother and father, had died. His direct influence on practical affairs had long ceased, yet thanks to a life of simple ways and healthy work, and to a tenacious will, he still had strength and zest for the prescribed daily conferences with his Chancellor and Minister President. His tranquil end on March 9th was a fitting close to a life which, in its private aspects, had been one of singular harmony and placidity.

Three events of the preceding year had afforded him great satisfaction. One was the impressive demonstration of national devotion which was offered to him in March, on the occasion of his ninetieth birthday. The anniversary was observed as a festival of the Empire and of Germanism throughout the world, and the celebrations in Berlin were attended by nearly a hundred princely notables – federal Sovereigns, heirs-apparent, and members of reigning houses. The second event was the passing of a new Army Bill, making a further addition to the peace strength. The third event was a visit from the Czar in Berlin in November, a token to him that Germany and Russia, though no longer the close allies of old, continued in unbroken friendship. Bismarck believed that this meeting led to the removal of suspicions of his integrity which the Czar appears to have entertained for some time. In the course of conversation the Chancellor found him to be chafing under the grievance that Germany had been playing a double part on the Bulgarian question. Asked for the proofs he replied that he had documents which spoke for themselves. Bismarck was able to satisfy him that these documents were forgeries, and the interview gave satisfaction to both sides. Beloved as no Prussian Sovereign was beloved before him, the idol of the whole German family, happy in the knowledge that the peace of the world was assured and his country strong and safe, William I had gained the things which to him were most worth striving for, and his death, while it left a large blank in the national life, created no immediate disturbance in the course of events. Within two years (January 7, 1890) the death of the Dowager Empress Augusta followed.

With him the last genuine representative of absolutism in Germany and thus in Western Europe may be said to have passed away. For if his first public interest was the army, his strongest instincts were centred on the preservation of every right retained by the Prussian Crown after the grant of the constitution of 1850. Sir Robert Morier regarded it as a weakness of the first Emperor that in politics he had no firm grasp of first principles. In regard to constitutional questions, the truth rather is that he grasped the wrong principles and grasped them too firmly. His opposition to every suggestion of parliamentary government was not merely uncompromising but unreasoning. For him the constitutional arrangements accepted by the nation under duress in the middle of the century were final, and he resolutely resisted all attempts at the further liberalizing of either the Prussian or the imperial system of government. Hence it was that he left the constitutional life both of the monarchy and the Empire just where he found it, for it had neither gone forward nor backward. Bismarck unquestionably spared no pains to poison his mind against democracy, and in so doing he sowed seed in fertile ground. In none of his known utterances will be found the slightest trace of sympathy with the political aspirations of the masses of the people.

Because the first, Emperor was overshadowed as a statesman by his great Chancellor, the idea is commonly held that he was a man of small intellectual power, of little sagacity, and even only moderately intelligent. No estimate of his character could be wider of the truth. His comprehension of domestic politics may have been limited, because warped by political ideas and prejudices which made it impossible for him to enter into the mind and spirit of the modern world. His judgment of foreign affairs and relations, on the other hand, showed a clear comprehension of fundamental issues, an unerring instinct for the line of honour, and a sure perception of the true conditions of confidence between Sovereigns, Governments, and States. No one can read his letters to Count Bernstorff on the Crimean War, the letters of a soldier who had had little training in public affairs, or his later correspondence on foreign politics with Bismarck, without being impressed by his quick, masterly, almost intuitive apprehension of complex issues and above all by his large fund of clear, direct, sane, downright common sense. He came to many right decisions without knowing why they were right. A more brilliant man

would have been far more liable to mistakes.

Probably the disparagement from which he suffers is due to the fact that when serious difference of opinion occurred between Emperor and Chancellor it was the Emperor who almost invariably gave way. What is now known of these conflicts, however, proves that his capitulations were often due to stratagems which he, in his simple truthfulness, could never have suspected, and that the victory in such cases was not one of argument or wisdom but of cunning and equivocation. Not only so, but even when he gave way his own judgment was repeatedly justified by the event.

Bismarck himself has said, " William I was anything but an accommodating master. He held tenaciously to his opinions, traditions and prejudices, and it was always difficult to persuade him to go a new way. How often have I gone to him expecting that I should be able to take away his assent and signature, only to be disappointed. More than once the long discussion ended with the words, 'At this moment I believe you are right, but give me another day or two to ponder the matter and sleep over it. I do not want to run the risk of overhaste.'" Never did he give his signature or assent to a document of State without first weighing it anxiously from all sides, and his correspondence with his chief Minister tells again and again of "sleepless nights" passed because of the too-ready endorsement of draft despatches which on further reflection he deemed to be indiscreetly worded and wished to recall. Such a man may have been lacking in resolution, but he certainly had a mind of his own and more than once on large issues – as in the case of the wars of 1864 and 1866 – he resisted to the twelfth hour the importunate pressure of his overbearing Minister.

The Hohenzollern throne has been filled by greater and stronger men than William I, but by none more conscientious, more honourable, or more devoted to the welfare of his State and people, as he understood it. He was a pattern of private as of public virtue, and the example which he offered of personal probity, simplicity of character, and orderliness of life was not the least valuable of his services to the nation.

A double sorrow rested on the land in those days. Germany had lost the old Sovereign, and knew that she must soon lose the new one. For almost a year the Crown Prince, now Emperor Frederick, had been

suffering from a throat malady, the malignant nature of which had been suspected but not definitely determined. He no longer appeared in public, and he had ceased to use his voice even in private intercourse. There had even been talk of a regency as soon as the old Emperor died. Meanwhile, skilful surgeons had operated upon and wrangled over him, and at last, after long denial on one side and perhaps over-hasty diagnosis on the other, it was admitted that the disease which had laid its malignant hand upon him was cancer and incurable. All that could be done was to attempt to prolong his life until in the course of nature the call to the throne should come to him. He was still wintering in the Riviera with his wife when the deathbed summons came to him from Berlin. Hastening north from sunny San Remo, he arrived home in blinding snow-storms, too ill to show himself to his people.

Seldom have a new ruler and a new reign given rise to more speculation, to wilder hopes on the one hand or wilder apprehensions on the other. He was now fifty-seven years old, yet, owing to Bismarck's jealousy of any influence with the Emperor save his own, he had been excluded from participation in public affairs except when acting as regent during his father's incapacity. A year before he had complained to Prince Hohenlohe: "I hear nothing; I learn everything through the newspapers. And the Emperor is ninety years old." Nevertheless, he had never concealed his opinions, which were uncompromisingly Liberal. These had repeatedly brought him into conflict with his father and more openly with Bismarck, some of whose public acts he had vigorously denounced when they seemed to be contrary to the spirit of the constitution or to prejudice the Crown and dynasty in the eyes of the nation. In politics he was said, with some justification, to be more English than German. In a diary kept during the French war, which was later to acquire an unfortunate fame, he had written, "Our principal thought is how the Liberal development of Germany may be carried out on the restoration of peace." That thought, which he had ever since kept before him, was in the spirit of the Court of Coburg, but not in that of Berlin.

The Conservatives attributed his progressive leanings to his marriage with the Princess Royal of England. Certainly he had been greatly influenced by the Liberal spirit and ideas which his wife brought with her as part of a rare intellectual dowry. Common tastes

led to common friendships; both of them found pleasure in the society of men of enlightened opinions – politicians, scientists, and men of letters – and among the welcome and constant visitors to their home were Helmholtz, Virchow, Dubois-Reymond, Freytag, the Bunsens, Stockmar, and Geffcken. The idea of a woman consorting with learned men and, even worse, talking politics shocked the conventional Conservative of Prussia, and created against the Crown Princess great prejudice, from which her husband also suffered. Since by a perverted logic Liberalism to the feudalist mind was the negation of patriotism and loyalty, the deduction was drawn that to be a friend of the Crown Princess was to be an enemy of Prussia. Here Bismarck shared to the full the prejudices of his old political associates. With the Crown Princess he had little sympathy, though he probably distrusted her less than Empress Augusta, for whom he developed a positive dislike, unreasonably attributing to her influence every failure to win the Emperor for his own ideas and plans. If, however, the Crown Princess suffered from the distrust and bigotry of the barbarian section of the upper classes, cultivated people in all ranks of society appreciated her, and even the Philistines, without being able to enter into her mind, admired her in their torpid way.

Not only the German people but the old Emperor himself had been anxious as to the direction which events might take under the new reign. Bismarck, however, was never in doubt that though there might be changes the force of tradition and of his surroundings would prevent the Crown Prince from venturing upon any radical departure. “I have no information,” he wrote in July, 1879, “on the question whether he will rule on fundamentally Liberal principles when he is called to assume the Government. Personally, I doubt this, and I certainly anticipate that if such a direction is really taken it will not be permanent.” Now that the riddle was at last to be solved national expectation was strained to the utmost. Just as the Conservatives, conscience-stricken as they recalled the use which they had made of their long domination, assumed that their day was over, so the Radicals hoped that their turn had now come to wear purple and fine linen and sit in Kings’ houses; the Clericals confidently counted at least on generous toleration; and the Socialists knew that their cause would henceforth be free from violent and unreasoning antagonism. To the surprise of most people and the chagrin of many matters went

on just as before. The Emperor made a few changes in the Ministry and the administrative service, but the wholesale displacement of his father's counsellors which had been predicted did not take place. Above all, Bismarck continued at his post as if nothing had happened. Irresponsible people had predicted that the first and most certain act of the new reign would be his dismissal and the appointment of a Minister of truly Liberal ideas.

It was not yet known that three years before (1885) the Crown Prince, with the complete concurrence of the Crown Princess, had assured Bismarck of his wish that he would remain in office when the new reign began and had told him that he had neither intention nor desire to supplant him. Bismarck's hope had been that the old Emperor might outlast his own capacity for useful work, and that when the new reign came he would be justified in seeking retirement and so be able "like a pensioned court actor" to "exchange the stage for the stalls." Nevertheless, he gave his promise to stay, and now the promise and the conditions were faithfully fulfilled. There had been an understanding that there should be no violent changes, and such were not made.

The Emperor's illness threw a shadow upon the new reign and gloom upon the nation. He was unable to move amongst his people; all affairs of State had to be transacted in the sickroom, and communications with his Ministers and friends to be carried on in writing. With every week the inexorable disease which had seized him gained further hold, and before three months had passed (June 15th) the hopeless struggle with death came to an end. During this short period affairs were more than ever in Bismarck's hands. He was at once Imperial Chancellor, President of the Federal Council, Foreign Minister, and Prussian Minister President, while his son Count Herbert worked in the Foreign Office under him as officer next in command. Happily few events of moment occurred either at home or abroad to trouble the stricken Sovereign. When the Imperial Diet and Federal Council adopted a bill prolonging the legislative period from three to five years he wished at first to withhold assent on the ground that it was a retrograde step. Bismarck had to remind him that in Imperial legislation the Emperor had neither veto nor voice, and the law was promptly promulgated. The same change was introduced simultaneously in relation to the Prussian Diet. The most notable

domestic event of the short reign was the rigorous suppression of the system of election manœuvring which has already been referred to. The Crown Prince Frederick had long watched with disapproval this trifling with the constitutional rights of Germans to exercise free choice in the election of their deputies, and though helpless to alter it he had condemned it unsparingly in letters to Bismarck. In assenting to quinquennial parliaments for Prussia he told the Minister of the Interior, Herr von Puttkamer, that the odious system of pressure of which he was the impersonation must cease, and that in general public opinion must henceforth be allowed freer expression. Puttkamer, however, was acting under the instructions of another master, and refused to take the warning. A little later the arbitrary Minister, for wholly insufficient reasons, prohibited at the last moment the performance in Berlin of a Luther drama, with the result that when the public assembled in the theatre it was to gaze at police constables instead of actors. The Emperor marked his displeasure at the occurrence by immediately cancelling the prohibition, and Puttkamer resigned, unregretted. A fortnight later the unpopular Minister died.

In foreign relations no change occurred. Bismarck was as insistent as ever upon the necessity for a good understanding with Russia, and here he found a willing ear. For a moment, but no more, there seemed danger of discord in consequence of the revival after several years of a project of marriage between Prince Alexander of Battenberg, now no longer Prince of Bulgaria, and the Emperor's daughter Princess Victoria. Bismarck pressed the old objection, the fear of offending Russia, and when that seemed insufficient he threatened to resign. Then Queen Victoria and the Grand Duke of Baden added their urgent influence to his own, and the Emperor and Empress gave way.

It is futile to speculate upon the direction which political and parliamentary life might have taken in Germany had there fallen to the Emperor Frederick a reign of normal duration. That important constitutional changes would have been introduced is very probable, yet they would have been gradual, and his moderation and marked sagacity would have eased the transition from the old order to the new even for the privileged parties which had hitherto claimed the German Emperor and his Government as exclusively their own. He never deviated from the principles laid down in a letter which he

addressed to Bismarck in 1863, during the Prussian constitutional conflict, when protesting against the muzzling of the Press: “The principles which, in my opinion, must guide every (Prussian) Government in its treatment of the country are – loyal administration of the law and the constitution and esteem for and benevolence towards an easily guided, intelligent, and capable people.” Whatever the Prussian monarchy and the German Empire might have become under his guidance, liberty would have flourished, the relations between the State and the citizen would have become less strained and suspicious, and above all the paralysing influence upon legislation of feudalist East Prussia would have been permanently neutralized. What he might have been expected to do for his country was to make it in reality what France was to have been under the later years of Louis Napoleon, a truly Liberal Empire.

There were not a few painful sequents to the tragic reign of three months – the callous treatment meted to the Empress Frederick by evil tongues and a pernicious Press, the public wrangling of the doctors and surgeons over points of professional etiquette, and particularly the episode of the Emperor’s diary. In September the *Deutsche Rundschau* startled Germany by publishing what purported to be a diary kept by the Crown Prince during the war of 1870-1871. The contributor withheld his name, but it was stated that the diary had been placed at his disposal by the late Emperor himself. There were many passages which were not at all complimentary to Bismarck, whose relations with the Crown Prince of that day were shown to be far from harmonious. The disclosures excited warm controversy, and the Liberals in particular extracted from them much material for political recrimination. Soon it became known that the diary had been published by Professor Geffcken, a Liberal publicist, who for years had enjoyed the late Emperor’s friendship, whereupon Geffcken promptly offered to meet in due legal form any accusation to which his action might have exposed him.

In Bismarck’s hasty judgment the occasion called for rigorous measures. He caused the professor to be summarily arrested as a preliminary to a prosecution of a charge of divulging secrets of State. In December he was tried before the Imperial High Court in Leipzig on a series of charges of which the most serious, yet in substance the most trivial, was high treason. Nobody seemed to know wherein the

high treason consisted, and most people agreed that the true and greater cause of offence was injury to Bismarck's feelings. An allegation of falsification of documents had been made, but it had to be withdrawn, for when the copy of the diary came to be compared with the original it was proved that Geffcken had faithfully published extracts without additions or alterations. His conduct may or may not have been indiscreet, but it was legally correct, and he was acquitted upon all charges and set free. The only men who derived discredit from the ill-advised proceedings were the Chancellor and those who had egged him into a course of vindictive action which recalled the worst incidents of the Arnim episode.

If there was no mystery about Emperor Frederick's political opinions and inclinations, his son and successor William II was as a book sealed with seven seals. Born on January 27, 1859, he had had the all-round education of a Prussian Prince. From his seventh to his fourteenth year he was set on the pathway to knowledge by one of the discreetest of tutors, Dr. Hinzpeter. Then he passed several years at the gymnasium of Cassel, and for several terms he studied at Bonn. In February, 1881, he married Princess Augusta Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg, a union which was one of policy as well as of sympathy, for it closed for ever the personal feud between the Hohenzollerns and the claimants to the Elbe Duchies. Then Prince William had disappeared again into the background. Another life lay between him and the throne, and the Hohenzollerns were on the whole a strong race. No attempt was made, therefore, to hasten his introduction to public life, of which, indeed, his father himself was still little more than a passive spectator.

All that was known about his political opinions down to June, 1888, was that he oftener disagreed than agreed with his parents, that a sort of atavism had showed itself in his character, in which were already detected traces of the Great Elector and Frederick the Great, and that he was a devoted admirer of Bismarck. Ingenious attempts have been made to show that there never was any sympathy between Prince William and the Chancellor. It may be true, but all the evidence is against such a theory. Professor W. Maurenbrecher, with whom the Prince as a student read history at Bonn in 1877, tells a wonderful story of his pupil's immaturity when he came to him. The sober tutor was shocked "at the opinions which he avowed regarding the modern

history and politics of Germany, and especially regarding Prince Bismarck." What the opinions were we are not told, but they appear to have been eradicated before the Prince had completed his university studies. "When the Prince took leave of Bonn and me," writes the Professor, "he was a fiery admirer of Prince Bismarck and the historical lifework of this statesman." That story, too, may be accepted or rejected at discretion.

A fact not to be doubted is that when he came to the throne he was as devoted and apt a pupil of the Chancellor as any statesman jealous of his reputation and power could have desired. Toasting Bismarck on April 6th, just a month after the death of his grandfather, Prince William said, in an outburst of generous warmth: "The Empire is like an army corps that has lost its commander-in-chief in the field, while the officer who stands next in rank lies severely wounded. The standard-bearer, however, is our illustrious Prince, our great Chancellor. Let him lead us; we will follow him!" For the rest, the only public interests which he seemed at that time to share were a socio-religious movement which had been started in Berlin several years before by Court Chaplain Stöker, and above all the army. It was regarded as significant that his first proclamations on the day of his accession were not to the nation, but to the army and the navy: "so we belong together, born for each other, and so we will ceaselessly hold together, come peace or storm." The proclamation to "my people" was issued only three days later. Nevertheless, even in the army he had revealed no such spirit of *camaraderie* as had made his father equally popular amongst officers and men.

The son's reign, like the father's, began well, for the tragedy of the situation for a time imposed upon parties an unaccustomed restraint, and on all hands a desire was shown to speed the young ruler auspiciously on his way. His first public utterances created favourable expectations. In his proclamation to the nation he had promised "to be a just and element Prince, to cultivate piety and the fear of God, to advance the welfare of the country, and to be to the army and navy a helper and a faithful guardian of justice." In opening the Imperial Diet on June 25th he endorsed the Social Reform Message of his grandfather, and promised to take into his care "the weak and crushed in the struggle for existence." "In foreign policy," he said, "I am determined to live in peace with every man so far as in me lies. My

love to the army and my position towards it will never lead me into the temptation to deprive the country of the blessings of peace unless war becomes a necessity owing to the Empire or its allies being attacked." This was all in the spirit of Bismarck, and a reassuring intimation to the nation that the old steersman was to remain. Bismarck, convinced that he was needed, and moved by the pathos of the situation, had thrown himself enthusiastically into the service of a third Emperor, and William II for his part seems to have fulfilled for a time the Chancellor's highest expectations. Discussing him with members of the Prussian House of Lords in June, he is reported to have "spoken with great enthusiasm and with tears in his eyes" of the young Emperor's earnestness and devotion to his new duties.

After affairs had been settled at home the Emperor devoted some months to a round of calls upon foreign Courts. He first visited the Czar, travelling by sea, accompanied by his brother Prince Henry and Count Herbert Bismarck. A short time before Bismarck had excited political feeling in Russia by first allowing the youthful Crown Prince of Serbia to be forcibly taken from the custody of his mother while on German soil, on the demand of King Milan, and then expelling Queen Natalie herself. The Russian Press had broken out into a chorus of bitter reproaches over these acts, and in other countries unconcerned with the political aspects of the question Bismarck's treatment of the Serbian queen had been severely judged. But what was Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba that he should weep for her? Bismarck justified his conduct by reasons of State. If Queen Natalie was Russia's *protégée*, so was King Milan the favourite of Austria. To offer her sanctuary were to take sides; he therefore asserted Germany's neutrality in a curious way by ordering her out of the country. As by this highhanded act Bismarck had sorely displeased the Pan-Slavists, he was now the more concerned to please the Czar. The two Sovereigns met at Cronstadt (July 19th) and several days of festivities followed at St. Petersburg. Marked attention was shown by the visitors to M. de Giers on the occasion, and when later in the year the Russian Chancellor celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his official life the Emperor was amongst those who most warmly congratulated him. On the way home from St. Petersburg visits were paid to the Swedish and Danish Courts. Later in the year (October) there were visits to Vienna and to Rome, where from the German embassy in the Italian capital a call was made on the

Pope. Nor were the Courts and chief cities at home forgotten; Munich, Leipzig, Hamburg, Breslau, Bremen, Stuttgart, and Stettin were all visited before the year was out. The first year of the new reign was thus a strenuous *Lehrjahr* of miscellaneous wanderings.

On the Emperor's return from the South the first inharmonious note was struck in the relationships between Sovereign and people. During his absence in Italy the popular newspapers of Berlin had freely and captiously discussed the earlier tension between the Emperor and his father. In receiving from the Mayor and City Council a welcome home and the present of a monumental fountain for the Castle Square, he rebuked them for having neglected to discourage these tactless interferences in his family affairs, and gave them to understand that unless Berlin learned to behave itself better it would cease to be a royal residence.

At the end of the year which spanned three reigns all seemed to have gone well, and the Emperor had no reason to be dissatisfied with the outlook either at home or abroad. Grateful that in his difficult position the trusted adviser of his grand father was at hand with counsel and help, he wrote to his "dear Prince" a cordial letter, assuring him that "the thought that you stand faithfully by my side fills me with joy and comfort," and "hoping to God that it may be very long permitted to me to work with you for the welfare and greatness of our fatherland." The early months of the reign did not pass, however, without important changes in the Government. New men were placed at the head of the departments for Home Affairs, Finance, Justice, and War; the hierarchy of the Prussian Court received new blood, and the diplomatic service was severely sifted and screened. Above all the army command was rejuvenated, and not a few old generals and other high officers were weeded out somewhat ruthlessly. In August Moltke himself, conscious of the weight of years, had sought relief from his duties as Chief of the General Staff, and had accepted instead the lighter responsibilities of President of the Committee of National Defence. His successor was Count Waldersee, already marked out as one of the Emperor's favourites.

So far the course of domestic policy had seemed to afford a practical repudiation of the old tradition that the Crown was in some sort an appendage of the reactionary parties, and their ally against the rest of the people. Thoughtful men welcomed the detachment of a

Sovereign who seemed to know no classes but only a nation, but its effect upon the feudalists was to provoke them to discontent and grumbling, and criticisms of Government policy more vigorous than had ever been known before in that quarter became common. Before six months had passed pamphlets were being freely written upon the internal politics of the new reign, a sign that the political armistice was already at an end. The Emperor now began to shake himself free from sundry importunate patrons who had ventured to magnify their influence with him. The Christian Socialist Court Chaplain Stöcker had publicly claimed him as a friend of his party, and had made full use of his name in propagandism for social reform and less reputable political objects. Now the Emperor publicly dissociated himself from the pushing divine.

Bismarck at the same time suffered from a recurrence of the Conservative animosity which had embittered him in the early years of the Empire. He had many enemies, and some of the most rancorous were men who in the past had been of his own household. Once again the *Kreuzzeitung*, which had already done him so much evil, associated itself with dark conspiracies against his reputation and influence. Politicians accustomed to look ahead had speculated, before the new reign began, as to how long the third Emperor and the first Chancellor would be able to work together. Prince Hohenlohe notes in his diary in March, 1888, while the old Emperor was still alive, “There are signs that when the Prince becomes Emperor he will not be able to live in permanent agreement with Bismarck.” Bismarck likewise had come to the conclusion that “before he had long been Emperor William II would want to be Chancellor as well.” To create mistrust and accelerate rupture became the congenial occupation of a band of intriguers, high in position and influence, of whom the *Kreuzzeitung* became the willing mouthpiece. Astutely playing off the Sovereign against his Minister, these men encouraged the idea that Bismarck aspired to rule the new Emperor as he had ruled the old one, and just as twenty years ago their newspaper had put forward Count Harry Arnim as a rival to the Junker who had dared to rise out of the ranks of the petty nobility and outshine the members of his class, so now they found in Count Waldersee the Chancellor whom the time and conditions needed. Waldersee himself, who was on terms of great intimacy with the Emperor, was said to lose no opportunity of urging

him to throw off the tutelage of an old counsellor who was out of sympathy with the modern age, and take affairs into his own hands.

In February, 1889, the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, a newspaper which later became notorious for its attacks upon William II and his policy, startled the political world by publishing an article described as having been "specially contributed" from Berlin, in which Bismarck's position was discussed in language so ingeniously cryptic and ambiguous that at first reading few people could decide whether it came from the hand of a friend or a foe of the Chancellor. One passage puzzled the more it was read and studied; in it the writer hazarded a doubt whether, if Bismarck were suddenly to be lost to the nation, there was any guarantee that his policy would continue unchanged, and hinted that the next Chancellor might be Count Waldersee, the favourite of the *Kreuzzeitung* cabal. Whencesoever the writer derived his inspiration, and whatever idea he wished to imply, his innuendoes confirmed the suspicion that active plotting was going on.

There was one circumstance, patent to all observers, which had large possibilities of misunderstanding and mischief. Bismarck had unquestionably long counted upon the reversion of his office, if not his influence, falling to his elder son. Hohenlohe, who had himself aspired to be the second Chancellor, had anxiously watched the development of this plan and had sorely chafed under it. " Bismarck thinks before everything," he wrote, "of planting his son firmly in the saddle. To this end he constantly works and schemes." Count Herbert Bismarck had risen in the diplomatic service by rapid strides, and every appointment abroad had been intended as part of his training for Ministerial office at home. At an age when the ordinary diplomat was content to be a Secretary of Legation he had become Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Secretary of the Imperial Chancellery, positions which made him his father's unofficial deputy and the recipient of his inmost confidences. Out of gratitude to the father the old Emperor had gone out of his way to help forward the son. Under the new reign men who believed their abilities to be equal to their claims became restive, and dared to protest against favouritism of the kind. There was even malicious talk of the "Bismarck dynasty" upon the establishment of which the Chancellor's ambitions were set. Subtle suggestions of this kind did Bismarck no

good with a ruler strongly convinced of his own capacity and jealous of his position.

In the spring of 1889 the Emperor for the first time came face to face with the problem of Socialism, soon to mark a turning-point in German domestic policy. The occasion was a dispute with the Swiss Government relating to the execution of the reciprocal settlement treaty of 1876, under which subjects of each State resident in the territory of the other enjoyed equal civil, commercial, and industrial franchises with nationals. Bismarck complained that Switzerland did nothing to check the Socialistic and Communistic agitation which was conducted by Germans and their organizations and newspapers from the republic. To this accusation the Swiss Government replied that the German political police had set up a widespread system of espionage in Swiss towns, under which secret agents were bribed to worm their way into Socialist organizations and even to incite their members to illegal acts. It suggested, further, that before Germany could fairly complain of the hospitality shown in the republic to political refugees Germany should modernize her legislation in such a way that her subjects would not be driven into clandestine agitation abroad. Even Socialists, it was suggested, had to live somewhere, and a democratic country could not be expected to accommodate its laws to Germany's methods of government. The dispute reached a climax when in April, 1889, the Swiss authorities apprehended a German secret agent who had been proved guilty of incitements to illegality in Switzerland and after expulsion from Swiss soil had returned. The incident gave to Bismarck the justification for pressure for which he had been waiting, and he denounced the treaty of 1876 and prepared to adopt reprisals by closing the frontier of Germany to the canton in which the high-handed act had been committed. Rather than quarrel seriously with so strong a neighbour the Swiss Government discreetly made satisfactory amends and the dispute was thus adjusted amicably.

Early in that year also the Emperor had an opportunity for making good his promise, given when he opened his first Diet, that he would take into his care "the weak and crushed in the struggle for existence." A great strike of miners broke out in the Westphalian coalfield in May. In that area alone a hundred thousand men came out, and sympathetic strikes at once followed in Silesia, Saxony, and the Saar district. The demands of the men were for an eight hours day and for higher wages

owing to the increased cost of living, and public opinion was warmly on their side. True to their traditional policy of hostility to the trade unions, the colliery owners refused to treat either with the men's organizations or their leaders, and it seemed likely that the struggle would have to be fought out to the bitter end. Then it occurred to the Christian labour unions to petition the Emperor to use his influence as a conciliator. The Emperor received first a deputation of the men and then one of the masters, and in consequence of his sympathetic attitude towards the former and of his plain speaking to the latter the dispute ended in a fortnight in perhaps the quickest and easiest victory on a large scale which has ever fallen to organized labour in Germany. Before this the Emperor had hoisted his colours as a social reformer in other directions. He had interested himself in movements for improving the housing of the working classes, and had admonished the leaders of the Protestant State Church to direct their energies more actively into social reform channels. Already the impressionable masses of Berlin talked of a "Labour Emperor." In one of his first public utterances he had warmly endorsed the Social Message of his grandfather. In the same month the last of the triptych of social insurance laws promised in that document was passed – the law making provision for the workers in old age and permanent infirmity. Like the other insurance laws it relied for support chiefly on the Conservatives and the National Liberals; the parties supposed to be specially representative of the working classes, the Radicals and Social Democrats, voted against it.

By this time the return visits from foreign Sovereigns had begun. In May the Emperor received in Berlin the King of Italy, with the Crown Prince and the Minister President Crispi; in August the Emperor Francis Joseph; and in October the Czar. His own visits were also resumed; he was in England in August and later in the year in Greece, at the marriage of his sister Princess Sophie to the Crown Prince, in Italy, and – against his Chancellor's advice – in Constantinople, where he had a truly Byzantine reception.

So another year passed, and so far as the nation knew the relations between the Emperor and his Chancellor were still unclouded. "I pray God," the Emperor wrote to Bismarck on December 30th, "that He will continue to give me for many years your faithful and trusty counsel in my difficult and responsible task as a ruler." Those behind the scenes

knew, however, that the halo with which the Sovereign had seemed to invest his Minister had already disappeared. The Grand Duke of Baden told Hohenlohe as early as April, 1889, that "the Emperor was beginning to notice that every now and then things were kept from him, and was becoming distrustful. There had already been a collision between the Emperor and the Chancellor, and the Grand Duke thought they must be prepared for the eventuality of the Chancellor's dismissal." Bismarck, for his part, confided to the same diarist the confession that "the sudden decisions of his Majesty" made his position difficult.

From May until the autumn Bismarck had remained for the most part at Friedrichsruh, retired and almost inaccessible. A mood of melancholy, irritability, and bitterness appears to have fallen upon him at this time, as though he were under the influence of a depressing premonition. Stories were told of the ungovernable ill-humour from which he suffered; he was even said to be beyond the influence of the members of his own family. Hohenlohe in his diary refers to a conversation with him on January 24th which left upon him "the impression of a man not quite sound mentally," and in the same place he writes on June 24th: "Even Herbert Bismarck said he had ceased to understand his father, and many people were beginning to think that he was no longer quite sane."

Whatever feeling of security Bismarck himself may have hitherto entertained, it was rudely shaken by a conversation with the Czar during the latter's visit to Berlin in October. To Bismarck's protestation of his determination to maintain the friendship between the two Governments at all costs the Czar had replied: "Yes, I believe you, and I place confidence in you, but are you sure that you will remain in office?" Recalling this conversation later Bismarck wrote: "He (the Czar) was far better instructed than I when he put the question, whether I was quite sure of retaining my place under the new Emperor. I answered, as I then thought, that I was convinced that I possessed the confidence of Emperor William II, and did not believe that I should ever be dismissed against my will, because his Majesty, by reason of my prolonged experience in office, and the confidence which I had won for myself, not only in Germany but in foreign Courts, had in me a servant whom it was very difficult to replace. My assurance elicited from his Majesty an expression of great satisfaction,

though he hardly seemed to share it unreservedly."

There seems to have been some justification for the suspicion which the Emperor had begun to entertain about this time that Bismarck contemplated a closer approach to Russia at the expense of the alliance with Austria. The Grand Duke of Baden told Hohenlohe in June that the Chancellor had set his Press agents to work "launching all kinds of articles against Austria," and that he was scheming that Austria "should attack Russia alone and of her own motion, so that no *casus fœderis* should be given and Germany could stand aside." Yet the direct cause of the breach, when it came, was disagreement not over foreign but home questions.

At the end of 1889 the time had come for prolonging the Socialist Law, failing which it would expire on September 30th of the following year. The Federal Council was of one accord on the question of necessity, and in October a bill had been laid before the Diet, embodying substantially the provisions of the existing law, though with certain amendments in the direction of greater severity. Dangerous agitators were to be driven from their localities, and were not to be allowed to return without the permission of the police authorities. In committee parties were principally divided over this proposal. The feudal Conservatives wanted expulsion from the Empire altogether; the Imperialists and National Liberals had no very decided scruples against expatriation, but feared that by creating martyrs it would help rather than check the Socialist peril; the Clerical and popular parties alone opposed the measure on the clear ground of political principle. The expulsion clause was rejected, but the majority adopted a proposal of the National Liberals that the bill as amended should now be a permanent instead of a temporary measure, and it went back to the Diet in January. Although the law had been promised in the speech from the throne, and was only awaiting a third reading, followed by formal confirmation by the Federal Council, the rumour now went abroad that the Emperor, acting upon one of those "sudden impulses" which Bismarck had already found disconcerting, had begun to doubt the wisdom of coercion. "Any one can govern with a state of siege, but I will govern them by liberty," said Cavour of the unruly Neapolitans in 1861. So thought the young Emperor of the Socialists; and remembering how Bismarck had for twelve years fought these adversaries with the weapon of repression, and had

failed, the idea of demonstrating to the country and the world that he could fight and overcome them without resort to exceptional measures appealed to him irresistibly.

The result of the prevailing uncertainty was that when the time came for the third reading of the bill the Ministerial parties were left without a lead. As the expatriation paragraph had been excised the Conservatives had no great interest in the bill and voted against it, with the result that it was defeated by a large majority. Public opinion became mystified still more when the Government did nothing to retrieve its defeat; and the silence of the Chancellor strengthened the suspicion that the Emperor and he had quarrelled. The Diet was closed the same day with a speech from the throne in which the unhappy bill was not mentioned.

For once public surmise was altogether correct. The Emperor later gave his version of the disagreement to Prince Hohenlohe. Bismarck, he said, wanted to deal with the Socialists more rigorously, whereas he was for closing the chapter of force and beginning again on new lines. His grandfather had risked nothing in assenting to coercion, for he had behind him a long and glorious reign. “But he was in a different position, for he had as yet achieved nothing. He would be reproached with beginning his reign by slaughtering his subjects. He was ready enough to act if necessary, but he wished to be able to act with a clear conscience, and first to make an attempt to remove the legitimate grievances of the workmen and to do everything that was possible to satisfy their justifiable demands.”

The Emperor’s attitude became clearer when at the beginning of February he issued two rescripts on the labour question. One was addressed to the Chancellor and the other to the Prussian Ministers of Public Works and Commerce and Industry, yet neither of them bore Ministerial counter-signature. The Prussian rescript laid down certain principles for the guidance of the Government in its relations to employees in State works, while the rescript addressed to the Chancellor proposed an international conference on the subject of labour legislation. This idea had really originated with the Swiss Government, which had already approached the principal European States tentatively on the subject. The Emperor induced the authors of the proposal to retire in his favour and he developed it on larger lines. Here, again, he had had to contend with determined opposition from

his Chancellor. The Socialist Law had already been abandoned. To follow that capitulation with new measures of social reform seemed to Bismarck tantamount to a double admission that the Government had all along been in the wrong and the Socialists in the right. He fought the proposal by argument as long as he could, and unwisely did not stop there. Recalling many such disputes with the first Emperor in the past years, and his unfailing device for breaking down resistance, he at last threatened to resign if the conference project were pressed further. The effect of this threat was the reverse of that expected; a silence followed which was meant to imply that the Chancellor must act as he would. There was no more talk of resignation, but from that moment the idea of a change of Minister took definite form in the Emperor's mind. The Labour Conference duly met in Berlin during the second half of March and adopted a number of propositions, in the form of answers to a schedule of questions, committing the delegates – yet not in some cases, as it proved, the Governments they represented – to ameliorative measures in regard to the hours of labour that should be worked by women, juveniles, and children in factories. Laws were passed in various countries carrying out more or less faithfully the recommendations of the conference – by Great Britain in 1891, by France and Belgium in 1892, and Holland in 1895 – but in the principal industrial countries it cannot be said that the gain to labour was very considerable. The principal value of the conference was that it gave a wider recognition to the principle of international action in labour legislation.

A wide province of possible contention had been opened up by the inability of Emperor and Chancellor to see eye to eye on two questions so vital to a true understanding of the working classes and to the further progress of social legislation, and the fact that disagreement should have occurred over these questions revealed an incompatibility of outlook which was all the more remarkable since Bismarck was wont to claim as one of his greatest triumphs his success in winning the first Emperor to the cause of social reform. Nevertheless, it is not certain that differences over the Socialist Law and the Labour Conference proposal would alone have led to an open breach. More important was the increasing disposition shown by the Emperor to restrict the large powers which Bismarck had been accustomed to exercise throughout his Ministerial career, and to take matters more

into his own hand. By the exercise of a royal prerogative which, though altogether constitutional, had for a long time been in abeyance, he had already, against his Chancellor's protests, appointed a Minister of Liberal inclinations to the Home Office in the person of Herr Herrfurth. Now he wished to cancel an important right which had been secured to the Minister President of Prussia by Cabinet Orders of long standing, and since the establishment of the Empire – the King of Prussia being ex officio the German Emperor – extended to the Imperial Chancellor, viz., his right to be present at audiences given by the Sovereign to other Ministers. Regarding this arrangement as a restriction of his independence the Emperor challenged it, claiming for the future to confer with any of his Ministers when and as he pleased. Bismarck opposed the innovation as an invasion of his most valuable official prerogative and as undermining his authority.

The question was an old one in Prussian Ministerial life. Early in the century Hardenberg had had to assert the very right which Bismarck now defended. A Cabinet Order of January 11, 1819, gave to Ministers the right to report to the King upon the affairs of their own departments, but only in the presence of the Chancellor. Wilhelm von Humboldt tried to over-ride it, and before he agreed in that year to take office in Hardenberg's Cabinet he asked the King that his position might be that of an independent Minister, competent to report directly without the intervention of the head of the Government. The desired permission was not given, and the rule set up in 1819 continued undisputed, and was confirmed more explicitly by a Cabinet Order of Frederick William IV, of which the object was to secure the utmost unity of policy, and to make it possible for the head of the Cabinet to assume responsibility for all acts of government with full knowledge.

This Order dated September 8, 1852, imposed on the Minister President the duty of exercising "more than hitherto a general oversight over the various branches of internal administration, so that it may be possible for him to maintain intact the necessary unity therein and so give me information upon all important administrative measures on my demand." The Order, therefore, laid down the rules that upon all administrative measures of importance the departmental head must previously, either in writing or verbally, arrive at an agreement with the Minister President; should these measures require the King's assent a report upon them must be made to the Minister

President beforehand, and this must be put before the King with his comments; should a departmental head wish to make a report to the King directly on matters relating to his portfolio he should previously inform the Minister President, so that he might, if he wished, be present at the interview.

Bismarck was thus not responsible for the right for which he was contending; it had been established in its existing form ten years before he became Minister, and all he now asked was that it might be faithfully observed in the future as in the past. Inasmuch as he was responsible, in the last resort, for the mistakes and failures as well as the successes of Ministerial policy, he contended that he must be allowed to hold his office on conditions which would enable him to exercise some effectual check upon the measures by which the reputation of the Government and his own credit would stand or fall. He had also a personal interest in protesting against any change at that time, for he knew that ambitious colleagues had gained the ear and the favour of the Emperor and were doing their utmost to undermine his position.

It is obvious that all the arguments which Bismarck was able to advance on his side were equally applicable to the other. What Bismarck understood by unity of policy was the unity of his own policy, and the Emperor wanted unity on just the same terms, for he was determined that Sovereign and Minister must once for all regain their rightful places in Germany, the one as entitled to originate, the other as bound to execute, national policy. When, too, Bismarck contended that the right to be present when the Emperor conferred with other Cabinet Ministers was necessary to his own liberty of action, the Emperor similarly contended that owing to his inability to hear and know anything at first hand his own liberty was crippled and made illusory. The real question between them was not, in truth, one of law or logic or precedent. They were contending over the far more fundamental issue: Which of the two was the real ruler of Germany? and both of them knew it. Bismarck was fighting for his old privileges, the Emperor for the right of the Crown to be free. Faced by the Cabinet order of 1852, the Emperor called on his Chancellor to put it out of force. Bismarck answered that he could not do so if he was expected still to retain the position and responsibility of the first Minister of the Crown and the Empire.

There are few less gracious sights in the world than that of two obstinate wills conflicting for domination, but this was the spectacle now offered for Germany's and the world's edification. In the struggle which had come to a head there were all the elements of tragedy. No Minister in a constitutional State had ever exercised so much executive power as Bismarck. The large authority vested in him as the head of the Prussian Ministry by the disputed Cabinet Order has been mentioned, but under the constitution of the Empire his power was even greater and more arbitrary, for that constitution recognized only one Minister, the Chancellor, to whom all other agents of Government, however high their functions, were entirely subordinate. And as if his constitutional rights were not sufficient he had enlarged them by steady encroachment upon monarchical prerogative until his position was to all intents and purposes autocratic and supreme. Could this position still be maintained, or must it be relinquished? That was the issue of the struggle, and the tragedy of it lay in the fact that while for the Emperor surrender could only mean the continuance, for a time which in the course of nature could not be long, of an arrangement sanctioned by the assent of many years and justified by great results, for Bismarck surrender meant intolerable humiliation, the withdrawal of all power from a Minister who had been all-powerful, and virtually his degradation to the level of one of his own assistants. No definite decision had yet been arrived at, yet though the issue was left undetermined Bismarck was not for a moment in doubt that the Emperor would sooner or later insist on having his way, and that he himself would have either to give in, which he could not and would not do, or to go.

Soon the question became involved with another and less defensible attempt to restrict the Minister's independence. The elections to the Imperial Diet had taken place on February 20th, and they went against the Government and greatly weakened the Cartel formed in 1887. Now was seen one of the first effects of the Emperor's attitude towards Socialism and social reform. The Ministerial, law-abiding, Conservative parties, feeling the ground cut under their feet, fought half-heartedly. The Socialists, on the other hand, fought jubilantly and with a premonition of victory, for with the sophistry that broods in political controversy they pointed to the abandonment of the Socialist Law as a capitulation to their demands and as an

indication that the Emperor could not be an enemy of their cause. The Ministerial majority, which had been made up in the main of Conservative and National Liberal votes, was reduced by about one-half, the Conservatives losing twenty-eight and the National Liberals fifty-seven seats, while the Radicals gained forty-four seats and therewith attained their maximum strength in the Diet, the Clericals gained eight seats, and the Social Democrats twenty-four, becoming now a party thirty- five strong. The displacement of votes was even more remarkable; the two Conservative fractions lost over half a million and the National Liberals the same, while the Radical groups gained a quarter of a million, and the Social Democrats nearly half a million. The breach between the Conservatives and the National Liberals had been widening for some time, and now Bismarck, seeing that his majority had disappeared, came to the conclusion that the time had come for a return to the old Conservative-Clerical coalition.

As soon as the elections were over (March 14th) he invited Dr. Windthorst, the Ultramontane leader, to meet him at his house in order to discuss the possibility of such an arrangement. In those days of hot passion and mutual distrust there were spies and eavesdropper everywhere, and news of this meeting reached the ears of the Emperor, who immediately sent the chief of his Civil Cabinet, Herr von Lucanus, to the Chancellor with a verbal message to the effect that "before holding political conversations with deputies in future he must notify the Emperor." Such an intolerant order, given by an inexperienced young man of thirty to a statesman of seventy-five, was more than flesh and blood could stand. Bismarck sent back word that he could allow no such invasion of his home life. Not satisfied with the answer which his envoy had brought him, the Emperor himself called on the Chancellor early the following morning to demand an explanation of his dealings with Windthorst. He received the same answer, with the addition, "The commands of your Majesty stop short at my wife's *salon.*" Wrathful at the renewed affront and the manner of it, Bismarck went further and reminded the Emperor that he occupied his position only that he might serve him and his country, and that "if he was in the way he was willing to make room for another." Once more the Emperor answered with an ominous silence that meant more than many words. It was evident that the old Chancellor was meant to understand that a new will was now

directing affairs and that he was no longer indispensable. Once again, however, before the fateful step was taken which for a time alienated Bismarck from the Crown and the Crown from the nation, the old servitor was brought back to the Cabinet Order of 1852 and given another chance of parting with it. Hard as ever the Iron Chancellor might be broken but he was not to be bent, and he still refused to comply.

But the Moor had done his duty and he now might go. On March 17th Bismarck suffered the acute humiliation of receiving from the grandson of the man whom he had kept upon the throne of Prussia in 1862 and placed upon the imperial throne in 1871 a peremptory command, conveyed through an *aide-decamp,* that he would ask for "permission to resign." To that order he refused obedience on the ground that he could not be responsible for the consequences to the Empire. On the following day the command was repeated and was complied with. It is not unlikely it had now come to Bismarck's knowledge that the Emperor had for some weeks been looking out for a successor, and had opened discussions with General von Caprivi.

His resignation was formally tendered in a long letter, dated March 18th, clearly reasoned and singularly moderate in tone for a man whose soul must at the time have been as molten metal. In this historical document of State he reviewed the relationship of the Prussian Minister President to the Crown and his place in the Ministerial system, explained the genesis and purpose of the Cabinet Order of 1852, and argued that unless the Minister President continued to occupy the status and the power conferred on him by the Order he could not conscientiously or successfully undertake responsibility for the policy and acts of the Government whose head he was supposed to be. If, therefore, the King intended that the Cabinet Order should be repealed he could no longer hold his position as head of the Ministry of State. There was no formal mention of resigning the Chancellorship, for the abandonment of one office implied the relinquishment of the other.

The concluding part of the letter was not less reproachful because its irony was studiously restrained. "I should have sought from your Majesty release from my office a year ago," he wrote, "had I not had the impression that your Majesty would wish to use the experiences and capacities of a faithful servant of your fathers. Now that I am

certain that your Majesty does not need them, I may withdraw from political life without fearing that my decision so to do will be judged by public opinion as premature."

The Emperor made an attempt to soothe the wounded feelings of the fallen Minister by the offer of a dukedom, to which he added a field marshal's staff and a full-length portrait of himself. Bismarck accepted the honour for his family's sake and because the title, Duke of Lauenburg (his estate of Friedrichsruh was in the old duchy of that name), recalled one of his earliest political triumphs, but to the last he continued to use the title given to him by the first Emperor. A few days later Count Herbert Bismarck resigned the office of Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and was succeeded by Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, a former Baden Minister. To the joy of the bureaucrats as well as the democratic parties the menace of a "Bismarck dynasty" now altogether disappeared.

No sooner was the Chancellor's resignation accepted than his ejection from the official palace – for it was nothing else – began. No time was left for preparations; he was put out, and his chattels were sent after him. Busch tells how within a few hours all his chief's papers were unceremoniously packed in chests and carted away after dark. Before a week had passed his successor was installed in the building which he had made famous. On March 29th, having first taken formal leave of the Emperor and Empress and visited the grave of his "old master" at Charlottenburg, Bismarck left Berlin amid frantic demonstrations of homage such as no emperor or king had received in Germany's capital before, either at his coming or going. On the other hand, there were many loyal subjects of the Crown who felt that the lament in which the Emperor voiced his feelings at that time, "My heart is as sad as though I had again lost my grandfather; but God has ordained it so, and I must bear it, even though I fall under the load," did not ring quite true.

The episode which thus reached its climax aroused throughout Germany and amongst Germans everywhere both pain and resentment, and foreign opinion was not slow to endorse the national verdict that by the humiliation of the foremost living statesman a great wrong and a great blunder had been committed. Most people recognized that a breach was unavoidable, but no one was found to excuse in the Emperor the impetuosity which had precipitated it.

Bismarck himself was far from blameless. He had become unbearably autocratic, and no longer brooked opposition. One might say that it was his own system what had avenged itself upon him – that he had fallen upon his own sword. He had re-enthroned in a constitutional State a new absolutism almost more obnoxious than the old, for it was the absolutism of a Minister who exercised powers which he had usurped. That on the overthrow of this illicit despotism he should have been the first victim to be carried away on the tumbril was tragic, yet not altogether unjust. The Empress Frederick said of Bismarck to Hohenlohe in June, 1888, that "he had reigned for twenty years untrammelled, and now could not bear to meet a will in a monarch." Unquestionably he had hoped to manage the young Emperor as he had managed the old, and the Grand Duke of Baden probably did not exaggerate the issue when he said that "it had become a question whether the Bismarck dynasty or the Hohenzollern dynasty should rule," and that "if the Emperor had given way upon this occasion he would have lost all authority and all parties would have looked simply to Bismarck and obeyed him."

All such pleas, however, while they may properly be advanced in proof of the necessity of a change, cannot take away the reproach that clings to the manner in which the change was made. The man who does a good thing badly is almost more inexcusable than the one who, though doing a bad thing, takes care to do it well. The verdict passed by thoughtful people of all parties upon Bismarck's displacement was: "It was bound to come, but it should have come otherwise."

The most creditable act ever done by the German nation in modern times was its refusal to desert Bismarck in the hour of his humiliation and fall. The man whom the Emperor thought to erase became more than ever the people's hero. Universities embarrassed him with degrees of philosophy, law, and theology, and half a hundred cities and towns welcomed him into the ranks of their freemen. For a long time Friedrichsruh became a Mecca for grateful admirers and fervent patriots, but also unfortunately for impertinent busy-bodies and sordid mischief-makers. For Bismarck carried his grievances with him into private life. Cavour, who had also experienced the mortification of falling into the background, at least temporarily, wrote towards the close of his career (July 22, 1859): "There is nothing so ridiculous in the world as the sulking of a fallen

Minister." Bismarck sulked, and like everything else done by him he did it well, not mutely but aloud, on a large scale, with a freedom which mocked discretion. As a consequence the first three years of retirement were productive of unedifying controversies and animosities which did good to no one concerned. They are not part of the history of Germany nor truly of a biography of Bismarck; they were aberrations, and having sunk into oblivion they are best left there.

Bismarck as the critic of Government policy was awkward and aggravating, yet European opinion was unpleasantly surprised when two months after his resignation Caprivi, the new Chancellor, acting on the Emperor's instructions, addressed a letter to the German embassies (May 23, 1890) instructing them to make it known wherever needful that "the opinions of Prince Bismarck were those of a private individual and no longer possessed practical value." Bismarck thought otherwise, and as the nation generally still preferred his opinions and judgments to those of the men who had succeeded him, he gave both with characteristic frankness. When in June, 1892, he travelled to Vienna – his journey to the South one unbroken triumphal progress – to attend the marriage of his eldest son, the head of the German embassy there received instructions from Berlin that neither he nor his staff might accept invitations to the marriage feast. Bismarck replied to the challenge with bitter words, while Germany's answer to this official boycott of her greatest son was to greet the dethroned Chancellor on his homecoming with ovations even more tumultuous than before, and the Emperor knew that every cheer for Bismarck implied an unuttered groan for himself.

So it might have continued indefinitely had not Bismarck fallen dangerously ill in the autumn of 1893. Then the Emperor, making the first approaches, as was the privilege of youth, concluded peace with the old statesman, handsomely if not sincerely, and to the joy of the whole nation. Bismarck reciprocated with all the outward courtesy and deference of an old courtier, though it may be doubtful whether the time ever came when he either forgot or forgave the injuries which he suffered in March, 1890. To the last he believed, as a large part of the nation has believed ever since, that his dismissal was the chance effect of royal caprice and the intrigues of his enemies. Unquestionably royal caprice played a part in the episode, just as did

the conspirators, base and less base, who lost no opportunity of helping the Colossus to his fall. But both caprice and intrigue were merely incidents in the play of larger forces. The fuller truth is that Bismarck's relinquishment of the reins of power was inevitable, because in the order of Germany's development; he had completed his special work, and his continuance in office obstructed the fulfilment of other tasks which did not fall within the range either of his sympathy or his vision.

It cannot be doubted also that to Europe in general the disappearance of Bismarck from the arena which he had dominated for over twenty years afforded genuine relief. It was not that European statesmen grudged to the great master of their craft his unique influence and apparent success in controlling the course of political events, but rather that they experienced a sense of liberation from dependence upon a man who to the political world at large had been an incalculable force, an inscrutable enigma, and for that reason an element of constant uncertainty and unrest. A strong belief – recalled at a later time with surprise – prevailed that with his passing, whatever might be the future of international politics, the elimination of the play of this powerful personality would make for greater quietude and stability, and that for a long time the history of Europe would be written in small letters.

Soon the death of his devoted wife, the pietist Johanna von Puttkamer (November 27, 1895), left him almost a stranger in the world. One by one his contemporaries of the older generation had predeceased him – the first Emperor, Roon, and last of all Moltke (April 24, 1891). He had made no new friends, for he had seldom admitted his official associates to intimate intercourse, and of the Ministers whom he had left behind some were busy making their peace with the new ruler and some were retaliating for past indignities by open hostility. The retirement for which he had often longed had not brought him the tranquillity which was to have been a fitting close to his strenuous and troubled career. Once, many years ago, before the allures of Ministerial office held him, he had gained solace in disappointment by the reflection that life is a passage and a show, and ambition and power, pain and sorrow, are mere figments of sense and brain. Perchance there came back to him in these hours of loneliness and disillusionment some words which he had written to

his wife from St. Petersburg in July, 1859, before the fibre of his spirit had been hardened by rough labour and turmoil. They may be quoted here, as affording a revelation of an aspect of his character which is but little known. Anticipating the future of his country with anxiety, he wrote : –

"But God, who can hold up Prussia and the world or destroy them, knows why it must be so, and we will not be embittered against the land in which we were born and the authorities for whose enlightenment we pray. Thirty years hence, perhaps much sooner, it will be of little consequence how it fares with Prussia and Austria if only God's mercy and Christ's redeeming love remain in our souls. Yesterday evening I opened the Bible quite at random in order to forget politics, and my eyes fell at once upon the fifth verse of the 110th Psalm ('The Lord at my right hand shall strike through Kings in the day of His wrath'). As God will, it is only a question of time: nations and men, folly and wisdom, war and peace – they all come and go like waves, and the sea remains."

Weighed down by years, worn by toil, stricken by weakness, a prey to the demons of sleeplessness and depression, his once dazzling eyes dulled by age and sorrow, Bismarck at last became physically a mere wreck of his former self. He died on July 30, 1898, at Friedrichsruh, and there was buried quietly and simply as he had wished. With his eighty-three years he had done justice to the record of his long-lived family, though his two sons were cut off in middle age. might seem that both physically and intellectually the strength of the Bismarck race had been exhausted in producing this unique figure, great in body and mind, in work and fame.

Bismarck once told Hohenlohe that when speculating in 1852 upon his career he had marked it out in decades; it was his wish in ten years' time to be a Prussian Minister, then to remain in office ten years, and finally to have ten years of rest in which to reflect upon his experiences. The speculation worked out with only partial accuracy; he became Minister in the year anticipated, almost a decade was left to him for retrospect, but his Ministerial career was prolonged far beyond either his expectations or his desire, for he was in office twenty-eight years without a break.

For all but five of these years the cares not only of the Prussian monarchy but of the Empire – first the half and then the whole – lay

upon his shoulders, and it is upon his efforts and achievements in this larger sphere of German affairs that his reputation rests. His nation will never forget or seek to diminish the greatness of the services which he rendered to its unity. He did great things while other people were talking about them; schemes so bold that his fellow-mortals grasped them only as ideas, he held before their bewildered eyes as finished facts. The Empire had been in the making for half a century before he came to power; it was he who finally drew together the sundered peoples and welded their irresolute longings into a mighty will for union. For, as Ranke says, in the great turning-points of history "general tendencies do not alone decide: great personalities are always necessary to make them effective." He found Germany inarticulate and weak, almost a byword amongst the nations of Europe; he left her consolidated and strong, her unity no longer the figment of treaties but the foremost fact in Continental politics. By heredity and instinct a Prussian of the strict feudalist order, his patriotism gradually broadened as, under his masterful guidance, the Empire asserted a larger place in the world; more and more he became German in his political outlook, until Prussian particularism came to be even more obnoxious to him than the particularism of the petty States. For the greater part of his career as a Minister he may be said to have typified Germany and the German idea in a way that no statesman had done since the time of Stein.

Nevertheless, his Germanism was never narrow or intolerant. Mr. Odo Russell wrote from Berlin to his Paris colleague in March, 1873, that the two great objects of Bismarck's policy were "the supremacy of Germany in Europe and of the German race in the world, and the neutralization of the influence of the Latin races in France and elsewhere." There is a misconception here, and Bismarck's actions prove it. That he wished to neutralize the influence of the Latin peoples may be admitted, since he sought to neutralize the influence of all countries alike – Latin, Slavic, Anglo-Saxon – in the interest of German security; but the assertion of German supremacy in Europe and the world was never the conscious aim of his policy, nor was such a purpose in the order of his ideas. He wished to make Germany strong and great, but only in order that she might be able to realize herself, live her own life freely and do her own work in the world without menace, and not that she might assert an arbitrary superiority

over other nations, still less impose her will upon them.

While, therefore, he was intensely proud of his nation, his nationalism was never vulgarly aggressive. Patriotism expresses itself in a great variety of ways, from the dervish dance of super-heated emotionalism to the frigid arrogance that divides mankind into one's own people and the others. Bismarck's patriotism may best be visualized by Englishmen as being of the Cromwellian order – strong, restrained, dignified, never given to boasting or to pompous words, but all the more prepared to resort to deeds at need. Nothing was more alien to his spirit than the Chauvinism which expresses itself in foamy passions and noisy objurgations; he was not above making use of such manifestations when they served his purposes, but he did not admire them. One can no more imagine him moving a hair at the singing of "Germany, Germany above everything in the world," than one can imagine a Palmerston or a Disraeli listening without *ennui* to the crude sentiment of "Rule, Britannia!" There was, indeed, a strong vein of cosmopolitanism in him, as there is in every man made in a large mould. The historian Delbrück has hazarded the theory that nationalism was to Bismarck only another form of doctrinarianism, and a biographer who came into close official contact with him during many years has asserted that he preferred at heart to be regarded as a European. It is certainly true that, while he judged foreign questions from the standpoint of national interest, as every statesman must do, who is neither traitor nor fool, he was able and ready in his dealings with other countries to appreciate their standpoint, even when he could not endorse it.

In all his relations with foreign Powers he acted in the spirit of the unabashed, unsentimental "real" politician. That attitude betrayed itself as early as 1857 in his dealings with Louis Napoleon. Defending, against the reproaches of his friend Gerlach, his readiness at that time to make advances to or even conclude an alliance with France, he wrote (May 2, 1857): "I do not borrow the standard for my conduct towards foreign Governments from stagnating antipathies, but only from the harm or good that I judge them capable of doing to Prussia." As he did not hate other countries, so also he did not love them. He confessed on one occasion that England was the only country to which he was ever strongly drawn – social amenities rather than political conditions being here the source of attraction – yet if at times he was

not slow to show her friendship, he was also ready to do her ill when Germany's interests seemed to make that course expedient. In all his political friendships it was a case of "Thus far and no farther." When the reproach was thrown at him that these friendships were "too platonic," he admitted the limitation, as being a necessary consequence of his theory of international relations. In his memoirs he has stated this theory in the words: "No great Power can place itself exclusively at the service of another. It will always have to keep in view not only existing but future relations to the others, and must, as far as possible, avoid lasting fundamental hostility to any of them."

Bismarck's unique position as a Minister of State and the peculiarity of his relationship to the Sovereign whom he served in various offices for nearly a generation can only be fairly appreciated in so far as we divest our minds of English ideas of parliamentary government. The same historian, Delbrück, relates how Bismarck said on one occasion: "Many good qualities have been ascribed to me, but one has always been forgotten; that I am a good courtier." In proof he declared that during the Prussian constitutional conflict of 1862-6 he would personally have been quite satisfied with two years of military service, and that he fought for three years only because the King wanted it, adding that for the same reason he would have been equally prepared to fight for ten. Bismarck used to speak of *la relation sure* which existed between the Sovereign and himself and convinced him that his devotion would never be ill-requited. This devotion was dynastic at root, the instinct of a man who had inherited loyalty from generations of soldiers and Kings' men, but with time it developed into a more intimate attachment, as the Emperor more and more yielded his will into his Minister's keeping.

That this subordination of the Crown to the subject was carried to a point at which it no longer served the best interests of the State must be at once admitted. Yet it might have seemed inevitable. Some men are fitted to rule and others are more fitted to serve. Bismarck was a born ruler, and his relations with his Sovereign were not properly adjusted until it had been decided beyond possibility of cavil which of the two should be the master: until then both of them had many uncomfortable hours. "I do not know how it is," he said to Roon once, "I do my best to please the King, but I succeed worse every day. I have all the qualities that should enable me to please him and to do what

he wishes. I am a Junker and a soldier, and I wish to obey him." "Oh, yes," Roon replied, "but you don't." Obedience was a virtue which Bismarck appreciated only in others; it was not for the ruler but the ruled to obey.

The year after he became Minister President of Prussia he assured the King that he did not conceive of his position as "that of a constitutional Minister in the usual sense, but that of your Majesty's servant, to comply with your Majesty's commands in the last instance, even when they do not correspond with my personal views." Such sentiments were excellent in theory, yet they did not prevent him from resisting opposition vigorously from the first, as a rule with success. The high language which he held in correspondence with the Crown Prince in 1863 on various aspects of the constitutional dispute then raging showed that he had already begun to take liberties with royalty, and that he felt so sure of his position that he could venture to take sides in the misunderstandings between father and son which occurred at that time, and which he certainly made no attempt to abate. Did he use the language of flattery when in 1866, fearing that his design of a war with Austria might be wrecked on the King's scruples, he wrote that even if his advice were disregarded he "would still think that God directs your Majesty's heart and would not therefore do my service less gladly"? Whatever may be the answer to this question, he overbore the King's objections on that as on most occasions, and had the war he desired, and the time soon came when his belief in his Sovereign's heart as a piece of clockwork divinely regulated and therefore sure to go right – if, indeed, such a belief was ever more than affectation – gave place to a less questioning reliance upon his own finite judgment. He had only been Minister a few years when he began to take the helm of affairs into his own hands and to threaten resignation when his will was thwarted. His line of action was first to convince the King that he was indispensable, and then, confident that the King would not allow him to go, to impose his own terms, which every year became more severe, as a condition of staying. "You know that the Ministerial crisis has been arranged," the King wrote to him on October 27, 1869, "and of course as you wanted." In that year he even dared, without asking the King's sanction, to remove from his post Count Usedom, the envoy at Turin, who had become displeasing to him. For a Minister of his overbearing

will to take liberties with the King once with impunity meant to do it often. With every capitulation, however, the influence of the Sovereign in public life decreased and that of the Minister increased, until at last Bismarck became a power not merely behind but above the throne.

His resignations were for a long time deservedly regarded as amongst the most ingenious pieces of mechanism in his political workshop. Threats of retirement followed at almost regular intervals, and so long as they were genuine the desired effect promptly followed. But some were far from genuine, and he was candid enough to admit it. No man had a keener sense of humour than Bismarck, and one can imagine the glee with which in May, 1880, he wrote to the Emperor, who had protested against another resignation, as not yet due: "I have not since (1877) seriously requested to be relieved of my office, for my request of five weeks ago (April 6th) could not have been taken seriously." When, however, it was understood that his threats of resignation were of two kinds, the serious and the not-serious, they all alike came to be regarded as unreal, and henceforth ceased to disturb either the Emperor or the nation.

Lord Palmerston was rebuked by Queen Victoria for withholding from her at times important matters of State. Bismarck far more systematically kept his King and Emperor in the dark, and in the later years he probably consulted him upon few questions likely to provoke acute difference of opinion. Some of the most momentous decisions of his political career were arrived at before consultation with his "master": such were the decision to press the Hohenzollern candidature for the Spanish crown in 1870, the decision taken after the receipt of the Ems telegram to force France by provocation into a declaration of war, and the decision to conclude the treaty of alliance with Austria in 1879; on all these occasions the Sovereign was ignored until the decisive action had been taken. But this did not prevent him from using the Emperor as a stalking horse in negotiations of a specially inconvenient kind, such as those with Louis Napoleon over the question of compensations, when it was expedient to give conditional pledges which he knew that the Emperor would never honour.

As time passed it came to be almost taken for granted that he was the real ruler of Germany and the Emperor merely the recorder of his

decisions. Long before the close of his reign the Emperor had ceased to oppose him, and on occasions of serious disagreement used to send envoys, like Hohenlohe, to reason with him on his behalf. This was bad for the Emperor, for the country, and for Bismarck most of all. Possessing so much power, even more was ascribed to him, and if he was spoiled the fault was only half his own. In Germany crowned heads hung upon his word, sued for his favour, addressed him almost in the spirit of vassals, and lobbied in his official residence like railway directors in a House of Parliament. Bismarck's correspondence shows that, with all their notions of divine right, these fading relics of political mediævalism were conscious of a stronger title to power than their parchments and old descent, and were ready to accord it unbidden deference. A Prince of Reuss writes to implore that "no hostile attitude may be taken against me and my country," and the King of Saxony thanks him for deigning to offer his friendship to "one who, though only in the quality of an inferior workman, has been allowed to co-operate in the establishment of the Empire," and hopes that his apologetic letter will "not be taken amiss." Bismarck, whose estimate of human nature was never high, and became lower the longer he knew it, took all such suppliants at their own valuation. Speaking once to Hohenlohe of the kinglets and princelings who had settled upon Germany like a swarm of bees, he said they should be glad enough to have a roof above their heads. Probably that was the best he thought of them.

Such a man could not be crossed with impunity. Sir Robert Morier, who believed that Bismarck did his best to have him removed from Germany, once wrote: "He leaves no effort untried to crush those whom he cannot seduce, and nothing can exceed the virulence or persistence of his animosity." The severity of this judgment hardly admits of any softening. The cases of Arnim and Geffcken are, of course, the classical examples of his vindictiveness; but his correspondence with the King and Emperor throws light upon other equally unedifying illustrations of his despotic spirit – of the denunciation of men, who were doing their best, because they were not sufficiently servile, of reputations precious enough to their owners torn into rags and tatters by the man who had the power of life and death over them. He did not even scruple to put secret agents into the German embassies in order that they might spy upon men whom he

wished to entrap and undo.

Early in his career he had wrung from the King a tacit understanding that he should be allowed to have about him just the men he wanted, and this right to choose and remove at will he exercised arbitrarily and without the slightest compunction. The highest Ministers of State who served at his side knew that they held their offices by the frailest tenure – the whim of a masterful dictator who had made them and could unmake them at will. Again and again men who had given their best strength to the service of their country suddenly found their way to the Tarpeian Rock for the only reason that they did not sufficiently obey or had ceased to please him. For courtesy's sake these victims of a harsh and rigorous discipline were said to have "resigned on account of ill-health," but all the world knew that the true cause of their disappearance from office and sight was that they were in Bismarck's way. Abeken wrote of his official chief: "His is a great nature but not a royal one." He overlooked no insult, forgot no injury, and forgave no debtor until he had paid the uttermost farthing. If an enemy smote him on the right cheek he promptly smote back on both. In all his personal relations he was a sheer, stark egoist, unmitigated, pitiless, and terrible. And yet – explain it who can – no man was more sensitive than Bismarck himself when wrong or unkindness was done to him. Some of his lamentations over the unfaithfulness of political associates who walked no more with him were obviously the utterance of acute spiritual suffering.

Nothing was allowed to frustrate the realization of his schemes, and if in politics he despised one thing more than another it was consistency. By every law of reason and statecraft he should have been a powerful pillar of legitimism, Conservatism, and tradition; yet he destroyed the Bund with violent hands, violated the constitution of Prussia for four years, overturned German dynasties and annexed German States, and he was at one time ready to conclude an alliance with the usurping Louis Napoleon; he sent bishops of the Roman Church to prison and into exile, invaded the privileges of the Imperial Parliament, introduced the civil marriage contract, suspended the constitutional rights of free association and assembly, and over-rode the Press laws without a pretence of legality. Lord Augustus Loftus relates that Bismarck often said to him that "he gloried in having no principles, for he observed that when you wish to gain a certain object

your principles cross your path and defeat your aim."

Bismarck's statesmanship was of the great but it was not of the moral order. He said once that the maxims of diplomacy were summed up in the words, "Qui trompe-t-on ici?" and one who knew his official life as few others had to confess of him that in pursuing his political ends he adopted "oblique and often crooked ways." Not seldom men judge most severely in others their own special faults. Bismarck cordially hated the Jesuits who was himself the greatest of Jesuits. His confession of lack of principles has been quoted. The disclaimer is, of course, paradoxical, yet it veils a profound truth. It is a great tribute to the moral standards of our modern age, which conceited elderlies are apt to accuse of decadence, that most of the current notions of social relations and social order presume the tacit acceptance of a high ethical premise. Thus when people speak of principles they mean high principles, just as when they talk of maxims they mean wise maxims, and when they speak of law they mean good law. Of course, Bismarck was guided perhaps more consciously than most statesmen by principles, but they were those of an utterly deidealized worldly wisdom. Had he been questioned he might have said that in politics he followed not principles but a goal. There could be nothing discreditable in such an avowal so long as the goal was a right one, for the law of public and that of private conduct are not in all respects identical. In questions of private morality motive is everything; in questions of public morality motive is subordinate to the end pursued. Yet the ultimate test of motive and end is the same, since both are justified or condemned by the one ethical law. Such a test, however, had for Bismarck no meaning. If before his political decisions he was wont to consult an oracle it was to the temple at Delphi and not Jerusalem that he repaired, and the question which troubled him was not, Is it right? but Will it succeed? Not without reason did he lay down the doctrine that it is not the business of one Government to dictate moral behaviour to another, since with morality the State has nothing to do.

The compliment of utter truthfulness which was paid by the Duke of Wellington to Peel and by Lord Granville to Canning – the highest compliment that can fall to public or private man – cannot be claimed for Bismarck. He did not lie outright, but neither did he always tell the truth outright; his favourite compromise with veracity took the form

of equivocation. Granted that his deceptions were chiefly over large issues and in the grand style, yet they were still deceptions, and no less flagitious because they were discovered or, as sometimes happened, frankly admitted only long after they had ceased to possess political significance. He practised deceit even in his dealings with his own colleagues. Upon many questions – and they were not the least important – he carried on two policies simultaneously: the official policy of his Sovereign and Government, and his own private policy, fostered clandestinely by such agents and measures as seemed to him most expedient in the given circumstances. If he did not wish the official policy to succeed, this subterranean intrigue gave him the means of obstructing it. In the Spanish succession episode in 1870 he instructed the German legations not to interfere on either side at the very time that he himself was secretly promoting the candidature of the Prince of Hohenzollern by all the means in his power. He undoubtedly connived at, even if he did not actually suggest, the denunciation by Russia, in November, 1870, of the Pontus clauses of the Treaty of Paris, yet he professed at the time to be shocked at the irregularity of the proceeding.

He never had any scruple about suppressing facts, tampering with documents, or making the worse appear the better reason. The motives to which he ascribed his public acts were sometimes wholly false and they were seldom wholly true, and it was never certain that the aims which he avowed were those which he was in fact following. So it came to pass that when he spoke the utter truth he was not always believed. Upon each of the three occasions when he wanted war he was shrewd enough to put his opponents as much in the wrong as possible, even by the use of strategy in which deceit played a prominent part. Perhaps no statesman – certainly no modern statesman – succeeded in an equal degree in attaining great ends by questionable means, so deliberately and systematically did evil in the hope that good would come of it, or was so skilled in establishing plausible justification for morally indefensible acts of policy.

One of his crooked ways was his systematic abuse of the Press. He reduced the manipulation of public opinion by the aid of venal newspapers to a consummate art, though an unclean one. He began the practice almost as soon as he became a Prussian Minister, and at first the King appears to have disapproved of it. Complaining of an

abusive article upon a reigning Prince which had appeared in the *Kreuzzeitung*, he writes to Bismarck in April, 1866: "You always told me that the Government has no influence on the *Kreuzzeitung*, but it seems to me that this is a case which proves the contrary." Caught in the act of newspaper intrigue Bismarck replied: "I would never dare to deceive your Majesty" – in point of fact he had just done it – "and openly confess that I myself suggested the substance of the article." In later years this perversion of the Press was carried on to an incredible extent by the use of public money. In his political bodyguard were skilled journalists chosen for their resource and their readiness to be his servile tools in an immoral propagandism which was not the less discreditable to them because they did his will with entire devotion. Even newspapers of the highest standing were willing to be duped and debauched by inspiration derived from these polluted sources. By their connivance public opinion was manufactured, obscured, or perverted at will, just as the interest of the moment required. From this pernicious system, which in its worst aspects ceased with Bismarck's resignation, the political journalism of Germany, free and bond alike, has suffered permanently in influence and dignity. A Minister is known by the private secretaries he keeps. It is a question of sympathy, congruity, affinity. Something was assuredly amiss with the mind which could find satisfaction, and unburden itself so freely, in the company of the ex-journalist "Little Busch," faithfully as that capable intriguer repaid his patron's confidence.

By the spirit and methods which he introduced into political life Bismarck did much to pervert the moral sense of his countrymen and to lower the standard of public right in Europe. It cannot be said that in the whole course of his career he contributed to the world a single idea that could lift mankind to a higher level of ethical perfection. He spoke often, indeed, of the moral *imponderabilia* which he held it to be folly in a statesman, regardful of public opinion, to ignore, yet when he allowed for these impalpable forces he did so because of the importance attached to them by others and not from any esteem felt for them by himself. Count Caprivi, the second Chancellor, left a searching judgment of his great predecessor's influence in a letter written after his retirement and with no idea of publication.

"While entirely acknowledging the splendour of his person and of our heroic epoch," he wrote, "I thought, even before I became

Chancellor, that I had perceived what serious blemishes were exhibited by the reverse of the splendid medal. What I thought ought to be the immediate aim of my endeavours, although it was an aim which could presumably only be achieved in the course of years, was to help the nation, without sacrificing any of its new national acquisitions, to return to an everyday existence in which it might again recover its old virtues. Prince Bismarck, as has often been said, had conducted domestic policy by the methods of foreign policy, *and the nation was in danger of seeing its moral standards lowered.*" And yet if, tried by the old moralities, Bismarck is found greatly wanting, it remains true that his very faults and transgressions were committed always for his country's sake, for its profit and not his own, and perhaps in judging the deserts of public men patriotism may cover the multitude of sins. He was made in a large mould, and though there were gross defects in the material his figure was nevertheless commanding and heroic.

If of the more intimate aspects of his character little is said here it is not because little is known or because there is anything to conceal. In personal dealings he was the soul of honour and his private life was blameless. His religious faith, too, of which in the early years of his official career he spoke and wrote with far less than the customary reticence of public men, was in its way genuine and profound. He might even be called a Christian in parts; though he did not believe, or at least ceased to "believe in soul" – it is questionable whether the word will be found in any of his countless speeches – he was "very sure of God." Once he spoke of himself as a bundle of prejudices; he was not less a bundle of inconsistencies. At a time when he was translating calories into exasperating despatches intended to provoke a rupture with Austria, he was penning to his wife edifying discourses upon the grace of God and the future state. It was after he had scarred the surface of Europe with three deliberately schemed wars that he set up the ideal of the Christian State and enacted a body of social reforms in the name of "practical Christianity." But the wars left his conscience untroubled; he said on one occasion that he had "settled that account with God." Not every statesman upon whose shoulders has lain the responsibility for bloodshed has been so fortunate.1 There are obscurities and contradictions in every character and life, and only seldom is the clue discoverable. Perhaps in Bismarck's case the clue

may be found in the fact that in his policies and decisions he was pre-eminently governed by intuition and still more by instincts; had the instincts been finer the results would have been finer, too.

Speaking in his *Memoirs* of Bismarck's success as a statesman, Beust attributes it to "a conspicuous quality which is exactly described by the English word 'unscrupulousness,'" and to "the good fortune that always attended him." Yet to represent Bismarck's statecraft as an unbroken sequence of political triumphs would be to ignore the facts. His career was so grandiose, he worked on so large a scale, and the immediate results of his plans were often so imposing, that it seldom occurs to the admiring and spellbound mind to ask whether, because he succeeded in carrying out so many of his policies, success could be claimed for the policies themselves. His fame rests, for the most part, upon the unique part which he played in foreign affairs, including the events which contributed to the making of modern Germany. His foreign policy, however, must be judged not merely by what it did for Germany, but by its influence upon and its effects for the world at large, and especially the European Continent which was the principal scene of his labours. The life of any one nation is part of the life of all nations. Hence foreign policy cannot be called successful at home if it fails abroad; if it fails at all it fails altogether, if it fails anywhere it fails everywhere. The German nation saw, and sees, its Iron Chancellor only as the great unifier at home, never as the disuniter abroad; as the gainer of new territories, never as the spoliator of neighbouring States. It does not remember, in short, that much that he did for Germany was done at the expense of other countries, and that in settling the question of German unity he unsettled other questions, which have never since ceased to be a source of international disquiet and danger. With all his dazzling triumphs of calculated statesmanship not a few feats of successful guesswork and even some brilliant failures must be laid to his account. Success has a way of creating its own conditions and so of repeating itself. When a halo had formed around Bismarck, and a Bismarck mythos had appeared, people began to look everywhere for signs and wonders, and because they expected they saw them. Acts and enterprises were successful simply because Bismarck was behind them; it seldom occurred to any one to ask for proofs. It is a safe surmise that some of his successes surprised himself most, and that some events which to his credulous countrymen

appeared in the light of triumphs were to him the reverse. He saw far and deep, but even his keen sight could not penetrate stone walls. The judgment upon a few of his moves on the political chessboard must be that he failed entirely to discern the full significance, or to anticipate the outcome, of his own acts. It can hardly be pretended seriously that the choice which made Austria Germany's close ally and Russia her enemy was other than a blunder. That Bismarck came to recognize it as such is proved by the fact that long before he ceased to be Chancellor he rued it. Of course, he never intended that there should be an actual breach with Russia, and in fairness to his statecraft it should be remembered that none occurred so long as he continued in office; but the Vienna treaty of 1879 was fateful, and the Russo-French alliance which followed fourteen years later was the inevitable result. His mistake here was less in the choice than in the choosing. If a choice between Russia and Austria was really necessary he may have chosen wisely – and at least he could not at the time have chosen differently – but the deduction does not establish the premise.

Again, his encouragement of France in Tunis and of England in Egypt, though admittedly proceeding from a desire to see these countries embroiled in foreign complications, was from Germany's standpoint a misfortune, for Tunis led to Morocco and for England to go to Egypt meant that she would stay there. So, too, his short-sighted refusal to acquire colonies for Germany between 1867 and 1884, when pearls of great price were to be had for the picking up, was a stupendous blunder, fortunate for other States. In his dealings with the European Powers he would have succeeded more had he not too visibly tried to play off one against another, all for Germany's sake, forgetting that nations are not marionettes, and that the ingenious policy of creating startling effects by pulling strings may, after all, be only a foolish thing well done. After breaking the peace of Europe three times he preserved it for twenty years, but it was by following the policy of bribing every leading Power in turn with territory or the promise of it – to each what it wanted – so long as Germany was left in undisturbed possession of the spoils of 1870. Thus he was wont to say during the later years of his Chancellorship: "In Serbia we are Austrian, in Bulgaria Russian, in Egypt English," and he might have added in North-west Africa French. Who dare maintain that an equal or a better result might not have been attained by the pursuance of

simpler and less calculating means?

Similarly, some of his most conspicuous acts of domestic policy cannot by any exaggeration of charity be regarded as successful. He found Prussia emerging from a period of political reaction, and he left her more hopelessly committed to reaction than for half a century. Yet in fighting Liberalism he called into existence in its place a far more formidable obstacle in the form of Social Democracy. This new political force he strove to vanquish by the weapons of repression, only to find that he had been sowing dragons' teeth, for every one of which there sprang up a new and doughtier antagonist. He tried conclusions with the Roman Catholic Church, and in the end not only capitulated but incidentally raised up a powerful anti-Ministerial party which he never ceased to regard as the most dangerous factor in national politics. He lived to admit that his Polish policy had failed and to blame others for the failure. His most dismal miscalculations in domestic affairs, however, so far, at least, as the disappointment of his expectations was concerned, were made in the sphere of social reform. Late in life, haunted by the spectre of discontent, he developed scruples on the social question and legislated on original lines for the wrongs of the working classes. Unfortunately all his nostrums, effectual and ineffectual, were applied in the spirit and with the hand rather of the horse doctor than the family physician; even in social politics coercion went hand in hand with amelioration, and his touch was hard. Because he exasperated the working classes by repressive laws and edicts at the very time that he was offering them social reform, his great schemes of insurance were received by them sullenly and without gratitude, and altogether failed to accomplish the political purpose for which they were devised.

Here this unique personality, upon which it has been necessary to focus the reader's attention so long and so closely, passes into the background, though not out of sight. Now other men came upon the stage of national politics, bringing with them other ideas and other ways of realizing them. The first result of Bismarck's going was to afford his enemies in official and public life – and they were many – immense relief, and to set free a hundred imprisoned vanities and ambitions. Hohenlohe, still Governor of Alsace-Lorraine, who had hung about the Court during the fateful weeks of March, hoping that his turn had come at last – he tells in his diary so early as March,

1877, how Bismarck's daughter had said that "her father had often thought of me when he was tired of vexations and wanted to resign" – was in Berlin again in June, and he wrote at that time, a little spitefully, but hardly without justification, that political reputations in the capital had become inflated; the old sense of being overshadowed by one masterful personality had disappeared, and now "each separate personality is conscious of his own value." On the whole the tendency was rather to excessive self-estimation. Small men were found climbing into large places, ambitious, though gifted with but a particle of Bismarck's talent and none of his genius, to emulate his fame and repeat his achievements. It was in vain. The strong bow could be drawn only by the strong man.

Once again it was Bismarck's system avenging itself, this time upon Germany. For so long as he was in power no other personality was allowed to assert itself. Strictly speaking, therefore, he left no disciples or followers. A later Chancellor spoke of Bismarck as "a postulate in himself," and said that it was "irrational to call for measures and enterprises for which this postulate is lacking." That was true from the first, though it was long before the German nation accustomed itself to the fact that Bismarck's resignation marked the abrupt close of a clearly-defined era in national history.

EMPEROR WILLIAM II. DOMESTIC AFFAIRS, 1890-1900 - THE NEW COURSE

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THE POSITION OF THE Minister who followed Prince Bismarck would have been difficult in the most favourable circumstances; the accidents of the first Chancellor's retirement made it also in a special degree unenviable. Count Waldersee, who had not come to the helm after all, had said that while he would not like to be Bismarck's successor he would gladly take a turn after that successor had eased the way. General von Caprivi had not wished for a distinction which, though a proud, was a painful one, and when in accepting it he asserted that he did so from a feeling of "imperious patriotic duty," his words were not those of empty convention. He succeeded at once in disarming his critics, however, when at his first official appearance in the Prussian Diet he confessed with creditable candour that he had hitherto been "strange to political affairs," yet promised that he would do his best. He had a high reputation as a capable administrator both in the army and the navy, for though a soldier he had once been head of the Admiralty, and all who knew him praised him as a man of perfect honour. Such qualities, added to soldierly simplicity and straightforwardness, more than counterbalanced for absence of brilliancy, and promised him success in the task of tiding over a critical transition.

Nevertheless, one of his first measures brought down upon him much shortsighted and undeserved censure. This was the conclusion in July, 1890, of the African convention whereby Germany ceded to Great Britain her rights in Witu and agreed to recognize a British protectorate over the dominions of the Sultan of Zanzibar, while she received in return the island of Heligoland and certain advantageous frontier rectifications in East Africa (giving access to the lakes), West Africa, and South-west Africa. The acquisition of the Elbe island realized a long-cherished German dream, but all political parties, and the colonial party in particular, contended that the price paid for it was excessive, since the renunciation of all claims in respect to Zanzibar and Witu made a great Central African empire impossible. For Great Britain the agreement had the advantage that there was henceforth no danger of British East Africa being hemmed in by German territory. On the other hand the cession of Heligoland was severely criticized, though the fact that it was made by a Conservative Ministry kept the militant imperialists under restraint.

To Germans in general the possession of Heligoland appealed at

that time only on the ground of sentiment. The naval authorities, looking further, already recognized its importance for the completion of their plans and were prepared to buy it on any terms. Nothing was said in the agreement about the harbour of refuge for the benefit of British shipping which Bismarck had dangled before Lord Granville's eyes when at Caprivi's suggestion he first proposed the cession of Heligoland six years before, and it was understood that the only shipping which the island, when duly fortified, would protect would be the imperial navy.

By this transaction Caprivi at once forfeited the confidence of the colonial party. He had never been a colonial enthusiast, however, and he plainly said so, maintaining that Germany had as many colonies as were good for her and that it was now her interest to consolidate rather than expand her oversea dominion. "The worst thing that could happen to us," he said a little later (November 27, 1891), "would be for some one to give us the whole of Africa, for we have quite enough as it is." He saw in the colonies a potential source of friction with other countries, and he refused to multiply the existing risks.

The early years of Caprivi's Chancellorship were for Germany a time of relaxation and liberation in many directions. Great as was the work which Bismarck had done for the Empire, and incalculable as was the nation's indebtedness to him, his disappearance from the chief seat of political influence unquestionably removed from official life an oppressive incubus, of which the full weight was only understood when the pressure was relaxed. The relief was felt particularly in the circles of the higher bureaucracy, but most of all in the Ministries. For the first time the colleagues of the Chancellor breathed freely, knowing that they had no longer to do with an arbitrary chief as of old, and the new consciousness of independence was naturally strongest just where the iron hand of restraint and discipline had rested most heavily. Prince Hohenlohe, writing from Berlin at that time, tells how a certain down-trodden Minister suddenly became as "gay as a snow king now that he can speak freely and the great man is no longer to be feared," adding, "This comfortable sentiment is obvious here on all sides." Each department of State began to develop a self-consciousness of its own, and in the hierarchy of the Empire Secretaries of State, though constitutionally subordinate to the Chancellor, deported themselves like members of the Prussian

Ministry, in which all were equal. Hitherto one man only had wielded authority in the State; now minor men took courage, and looking no more with awe upon the tree of power began to nibble freely at its long-forbidden fruit.

Most free of all was the Sovereign himself, and more than any other he was in a position to appreciate the change. After sharing its authority with a despotic Minister for nearly thirty years the Prussian Crown was again independent; for the first time a German Emperor could claim to be his own master. Now the personality of the ruler began to make itself felt, to a degree unknown before, both in legislation and in the direction of public policy. In a speech made in April, 1890, immediately after Bismarck's resignation, the Emperor, in appealing for the nation's loyal co-operation, spoke suggestively of the "new course" which Germany was to follow under his guidance. For a time all the auguries seemed to justify the hope that this shifting of political influence would on the whole prove a change for the better. Generous impulses, buoyant hopes, and a passionate desire to achieve great things for his country's good were revealed alike by the Emperor's public utterances and his public acts. He showed active interest in all the varied life of the nation, in its moral and material welfare, in education and art, in religious and church activities, in trade, industry, and labour. Every indication pointed to his reign being identified in a special manner with social reform. All sorts of movements of an ameliorative character were set on foot at his instigation or with his encouragement – housing reform, endeavours to combat consumption and infant mortal ity, organized efforts for preventing accidents in factories, and the like. He tried to rouse the comfortable classes out of their torpid attitude towards social conditions, called for a closer sympathy between intellect and labour, and reminded the Protestant clergy, hitherto so concerned about religion that they had had no time to care for morality, of their civic responsibilities.

Seldom has a Prussian ruler thrown himself so completely upon the confidence of his people as William II appeared to do while still on the threshold of his reign. In his endeavours to improve social conditions he appealed for "the intelligent and joyous co-operation of all classes of the population, and especially of the working classes, whose interests are concerned, and of the employers who are prepared

to make the necessary sacrifices." He tried to lift the social movement out of the atmosphere of party controversy: "all are heartily welcome," he said, "whoever they may be." In order to encourage his people in well-doing he established a new Order, called after his grandfather, in recognition of conspicuous social service.

Under these manifold impulses a new spirit seemed to come over the nation in relation to the many-sided problem of the condition of the people, and the social reform movement now took root in a way it had never done during the first reign. German writers on this subject often speak of contemporary Germany as distinctively the Social Empire. The foundation of the social legislation by which this title must be justified, if justified at all, had been laid before William II came to the throne, but it is certainly the merit of that ruler that for a time he gave greater definiteness and a clearer purpose to the vague humanitarian sentiment which had already become active and carried social policy forward on intelligent and sympathetic lines. From the first he found a valuable ally in the Clerical party, which, joining hands with the patriarchal Conservatives, now began to take a decided stand on social questions, so reviving a dormant tradition established many years before by earnest reformers of their faith like Bishop Ketteler, Canon Moufang, and Father Kolping. In convening the Labour Conference, the Emperor had invited the Pope to allow Prince Bishop Kopp, of Breslau, to take part, and the Roman Catholic Church had not been slow to reciprocate the compliment thus paid to it. Henceforth both the religious and the political leaders of Catholicism closely identified themselves with social reform, and all later measures for the amelioration of the people owed at least as much to Catholic as to Protestant support. In September, 1890, the Roman Catholics held an international labour conference of their own at Louvain, and in May of the following year Leo XIII published his memorable Encyclical on the labour question, *Rerum Novarum,* which for Roman Catholics everywhere became a rule of public conduct and policy.

The missing link in the system of social insurance had been added in 1889 by the enactment of the Old Age and Invalidity Insurance Law providing for the pensioning of the veterans and wreckages of the industrial army. Now the Labour Conference began to bear fruit. Laws for the amendment of the Industrial Code in the spirit of the resolutions adopted by the Conference and for the creation of

Industrial Courts for the settlement of monetary disputes arising between workpeople and their employers were passed in 1890. Before this time the only imperial legislation relating to the hours of labour were provisions forbidding the employment of juveniles (i.e. youths under sixteen years) on Sundays and legal holidays and forbidding the employment on these days of workers generally against their will. In the absence of an express prohibition something had been done to encourage Sunday observance by police and administrative orders, but such measures were sporadic and partial, and in practice work on this day was still common in most parts of Germany. Now the weekday employment of women, juveniles, and children was restricted, though nothing was done for adult males, and Sunday rest was made obligatory instead of permissive for all workers. One immediate result of the new legislation was the virtual disappearance of children of school age from factories and workshops; in 1888 the number so employed was 23,000 in all Germany – nearly one-half being in Saxony alone – but by 1893 only 4,- 000 remained. Factory inspection was also made more efficient. Bismarck, disliking every kind of interference between capital and labour, had opposed all efforts in this direction, and herein had found himself in rare accord with the individualist Radicals. The consequence was that in 1888 there were in all Germany only forty-eight factory inspectors with twenty-nine assistants, and that the factory legislation of the day, poor as it was, was enforced half-heartedly. The inspection of factories was still allowed to remain a function of the State Governments, but the Imperial Executive now required it to be done systematically. The workers were also given the right to form committees through which to negotiate with their employers regarding conditions of employment.

In 1892 a labour department was formed in the Imperial Statistical Office as a means of bringing the whole province of labour under more complete survey, and this example was soon followed in Great Britain and other countries. A weak attempt was made simultaneously to make severer the penalties for any abuse of the right of coalition, but the Diet, in its new enthusiasm for social reform, was unwilling to dilute conciliation by coercion in the old ungracious way, and it rejected this reactionary proposal, leaving the amendment of the Industrial Code a straightforward and sympathetic attempt to give to

labour greater protection. All these measures marked an important advance in social legislation, yet to a large extent Germany was only bringing up to date arrears of work which had long been allowed to accumulate, and assimilating her laws to those of countries with an older industrial and a more advanced political system.

Milder measures were tried at this time in the treatment of the alien races in the East and West. So long as Bismarck remained in office the policy of hardness continued in the Polish provinces. The appointment of Caprivi was the signal for one of those fitful attempts to reconcile the Poles which for over a century have alternated with prolonged periods of rigorous government. The policy of land purchase and settlement was for a time suspended, but as there was no idea of its definite abandonment that half-measure proved unfortunate from the financial standpoint, for prices were exceptionally low in the early 'nineties, and the opportunities of buying on favourable terms which existed then never returned. For a time the Emperor-King went out of his way to win the good-will of his Polish subjects. Poles were admitted to positions of favour and eminence. A Pole, Florian von Stablewski, became archbishop of Posen in 1892; Polish nobles suddenly became welcome visitors at Court; and when the Polish group in the Imperial Diet voted for a new Army Bill in July, 1893, the Sovereign publicly applauded the act as one of exemplary patriotism by which other parties would do well to profit. This apparent favouring of the Poles created a violent outburst of indignation amongst the Germans of the Eastern Marks, and as Friedrichsruh then served as a Cave of Adullam to which the malcontents of all parties resorted a deputation promptly made pilgrimage to the ex-Chancellor and laid their grievances before him. As a result of this conference an organization, known as the Eastern Marches Association, was at once formed for the defence of Germanism in the Polish provinces. It was not long before this association changed its defensive for an aggressive character, and became a potent agency for fomenting ill-feeling between the two nationalities.

Yet friendly and indulgent as was the disposition of the new ruler towards the Poles at that time, his acts of personal goodwill were powerless to efface the consequences of the unsympathetic administration which was carried on in his name. In conferring upon

Stablewski his see he had urgently charged him to endeavour to "reconcile antagonisms which have no right to exist between people of the same country." That was far more easily said than done. Try as he would, the Archbishop could not counteract the effect of the harsh policy which had gone before and the administrative short-sightedness which still continued, out of reach of royal influence. In a short time the new zeal for conciliation was exhausted, and it needed no effort to fall back into the old ways. Visiting the eastern districts of the monarchy in the autumn of 1894 the Sovereign foretold the end of his patience, and coming to Thorn he bade the Poles remember "I can be very disagreeable, and I shall be if necessary." Soon the necessity was held to have arisen. A new era of land purchase began, accompanied by the wholesale clearance of Polish and their replacement by German families. When the parliamentary grants were exhausted fresh funds were voted, first in 1898 and again in 1902.

The Government's experience in Alsace-Lorraine was even more discouraging. There Prince Hohenlohe continued to be the Stadholder, and he had become wedded to the idea that only resolute government could avail. Hohenlohe appears to have allowed the Ministers in Berlin a wider latitude than was needful, in view of the large powers secured to him by the constitution of the provinces, and Berlin, being convinced that the resistance of the Alsatians to German rule in the Prussian spirit was mere perversity, was but little disposed to pay further heed to the susceptibilities of the conquered population. Hohenlohe in March, 1891, relates a conversation with the Secretary of State von Marschall who had "spoken very contemptuously of Alsace-Lorraine, and said it was a matter of total indifference in Berlin whether the inhabitants were satisfied or not, and that in the event of war Alsace-Lorraine would become the principal battlefield." Even Caprivi seemed to regard the prospect of conciliation as hopeless. Convinced that the Alsatians could not be Germanized, he said that the only alternative was to "deepen the ditch" that divided them from France. Nevertheless, there was a sudden return to a milder *régime* in September, when it was decided to relax the passport regulations which had been issued in May, 1888, and to apply them for the future in the main to military persons. Other ameliorations followed, and if there was still little contentment in the provinces there was greater comfort. Never during the third reign was there any repetition of

repression in the grosser forms which were common in the early years of the German occupation. Signor Crispi relates a conversation with Bismarck in May, 1889, in which he had suggested the old idea of neutralizing the provinces as a means of diminishing the risk of war with France. Bismarck disagreed and doubted whether Crispi's expectation would be realized. "The time for neutral States is past," he said. "The French Government will not agree to it, but not even that would suffice to ward off war. We should no longer be able to threaten France by land, while France would be able to attack us by sea."

The Emperor's first great disappointment came when he discovered that in spite of his efforts for their good the working classes refused to turn their backs upon Socialism. In 1887 the Socialist party had suffered a temporary reverse at the polls, for a war scare had seized hold upon the nation, with the result that the Conservative and National Liberal parties gained heavily at the expense of the parties of the Left. The Socialist deputies were reduced from twenty-four to eleven, in spite of a large increase in votes. Before the next elections took place, in February, 1890, the decisions to abandon the Socialist Law and to convene the Labour Conference had been taken, and the complete change in the Government's attitude towards labour thus indicated was represented by the Socialists as a vindication of their position and an endorsement of their claims. In these elections the party won its first great victory. Not only did it return to the Diet thirty-five strong, but the votes recorded for its candidates increased from three quarters of a million to nearly a million and a half. The Socialist Law expired on September 30, 1890, amid the jubilation of the working classes, who celebrated the restoration of unfettered thought and speech by demonstrations in every part of the country. With the disappearance of coercion a flood of pent-up political energy was let loose and a powerful impetus given to agitation. The first congress of the party after its recovered freedom was held at Halle in October under the influence of this new elation, and there a triumphant story of progress could be told. At the Erfurt Congress of the following year the programme of the party was revised, its organization further strengthened, and its machinery of propagandism perfected. The result was that at the appeal to the country in June, 1893, the party again won a signal triumph. Having

gained in three years over a third of a million votes, it was now a party of one and three-quarter millions, and its forty-four seats made it the fourth strongest group in the Diet.

All this was for the Emperor a disconcerting revelation. He had hazarded the belief, for which he had no justification other than a happy optimism which indisposed him to look facts fairly in the face, that Social Democracy was a "transient phenomenon which would be exhausted by its own violence," and while confident in the success of his social measures, he had declared that in passing them he looked for no thanks, but only for the approval of his own conscience. It proved difficult, however, to live up to such a high faith when ingratitude took the form of an ever-increasing army of malcontents, pledged to the destruction not only of the existing social order but of the institution of monarchy itself. In November, 1891, he had told the recruits at Potsdam: "If Socialist agitations continue as they are doing, I may have to order you to shoot down your relatives, your brothers, even your parents – which God forbid! – but even then you must obey my commands without murmuring." Later the Socialists became "a pack of men unworthy to bear the name of Germans" and "a treasonable horde," to combat which was the duty of every patriotic citizen. The avowal of sentiments like these only added fuel to the flames.

Soon disaffection ceased to be confined to the Socialists, and spread to political circles which had nothing in common with their extreme aims, even to those which the Crown had traditionally regarded as its special allies. In the meantime also the divisions created by the Emperor's quarrel with Bismarck, far from showing signs of healing, had been intensified by the defiant challenges which the ex-Chancellor constantly flung right and left. From his watch-tower at Friedrichsruh he followed with alarm the gradual abandonment of his own principles, and his censures spared neither his successor in office nor the Emperor himself. He had allowed himself to be elected to the Diet by National Liberal votes, but he did not take his seat; instead, he passed judgment upon the Government and its policy in incessant speeches to deputations and visitors, in letters to sympathetic inquirers, and in inspired articles in the Press of Germany and other countries. He claimed such right of criticism, since he had, as Metternich said after his retirement, "changed the stage for

the stalls," and criticize he did freely and remorselessly. Many of his criticisms were intrinsically justifiable, and perhaps were necessary, though they might have come from another source with better grace and greater advantage to the public interest; others, on the contrary, were factious and mischievous, and often caused the Government acute embarrassment. It was the irritating influence of the ex-Chancellor's utterances and the knowledge that he had so large and sympathetic a hearing in the country that led the Emperor to remind the nation in a speech at Düsseldorf in May, 1891: "One only is master in the Empire, and it is I; I tolerate no other."

The Conservatives now forgot every reproach which they had ever made against the Junker Minister, in remembrance of the fact that on the whole his policy had been far more for than against them, while his successor refused to play the political game as the feudalists understood it. Even the middleclass parties, which had never been spoiled by privilege, were impatient that history was no longer being made on the grand scale of Bismarck's days. Their place then had, it is true, been in the background of the political stage, but at least they had had the consciousness of having witnessed upon that stage the acting of a great national drama. Moreover, the Radicals and democrats had viewed with growing misgiving and alarm the Sovereign's constant intrusions in political controversy and the frequent utterances in which he had made it clear that he entertained entirely new conceptions of the Crown's place in constitutional life. Already, in a much-discussed speech made at Königsberg (May, 1890), where in 1861 William I had crowned himself with his own hand, the Emperor had revived the doctrine of divine right, a doctrine disowned by his father and discredited even by the official historiographer of Prussia, Heinrich von Treitschke, as "Jacobite mysticism." Thoughtful men throughout Germany gravely disapproved when at a visit to Munich (November, 1891) he wrote in the city's Golden Book, *Suprema lex regis voluntas esto*," and recalled the truer and wiser maxim which the Chancellor Hardenberg had dared to address to his forefather Frederick William III seventy-five years before, "Salus publica suprema lex esto!"

The autocratic *régime* of Bismarck had been abolished, but all the probabilities seemed now to point to the imminence of another, even more insidious in character, under which parties would have to deal,

not as hitherto with a Minister whose political philosophy was summed up in the crude yet still arguable theory that might created right, but with a sovereign who boldly claimed for his office divine sanction and for his acts divine inspiration and guidance. Suspicion was even aroused of his desire to return to the undiluted Cæsarism of the preconstitutional era. While still Chancellor, Bismarck had confessed to Hohenlohe that it was his belief that the Emperor wished to be his own Chancellor. The anticipation was already in course of realization.

Probably no modern Sovereign was so confident of his own capacity in public affairs, or so ready to face responsibility with so little justification, as Emperor William II in the early years of his reign. No one could doubt his gifts or the earnestness of his desire to "exercise his office for the welfare of the fatherland," according to the promise of his first proclamation to the nation. Like many other men impatient for action, however, he failed to recognize that the art of statecraft has to be learned like other arts, and more laboriously than most, and exalting intuition in the place of experience, he committed many impatient and impetuous acts at which grave men shuddered. Bismarck, in all his policy, had been guided by a cold objectivity which respected only facts, and was sceptical even of them. The young Emperor allowed his judgment to be unduly swayed by subjective considerations, fugitive emotions, prejudices, and predilections, vehement likes and more vehement dislikes. He conceived himself to be the embodiment of a new spirit, and the representative of a new age, and with the credulity of the ardent discoverer he concluded that this age must be governed by forces different from those which had governed the old. Self-absorbed and introspective to an unhealthy degree, he was almost altogether closed to outside influences, and was thus without the master-key to the understanding of human nature and affairs. Fulsome adulation was showered upon him by professional courtiers and self-seeking worldlings without rebuke, and upon a man of his temperament its effect was fatal. All these incidents of his character and position conspired to encourage in him a disposition to judge events from a false perspective, and caused him to lose the right measure both for realities and abstractions.

It was obvious that the full significance of these influences and tendencies would be seen only in later years, but already there was

much anxious foreboding, and his impatience of either opposition or criticism strengthened the doubts even of those whose loyalty to his person was beyond question. Addressing the Brandenburg Diet in February, 1892, he poured derision upon the whole tribe of critics and "naggers." While he worked, he said, all they could do was to find fault; very well, if conditions in Germany were really so unsatisfactory, "let them shake the dust from their feet and leave the country for its good and their own." His own confidence in himself and the future was unbounded. "We are passing," he added, "through moving and stimulating times, but unfortunately the great majority of men lack sound and impartial judgment. The stirring days will be followed by quiet ones if the people will do their duty, correct their ways, and, disregarding outside criticism, trust firmly in God and in the honest and solicitous labour of their ruler. . . . Brandenburgers, believe me, a great destiny awaits us. I lead you forward towards glorious days. Do not allow yourselves to become pessimistic in consequence of the fault-finding and criticism of party men. Direct your vision towards the future, and do not allow others to diminish your pleasure in co-operating with me. Sententious phrases prove nothing. To those who unceasingly allude with dissatisfaction to the new course and to those who steer it, I reply quietly but with determination: 'My course is the right one, and I shall continue to follow it.'"

Early in the same year the fears of the Liberals seemed to be justified by the introduction in the Prussian Diet of an Education Bill so reactionary in character that it threw the whole country into consternation. The blow was as bold as it was unexpected. Two years before the Minister of Education, Dr. von Gossler, had produced a measure which, while retaining the old confessional principle, proposed to place the control over secular and religious instruction more definitely in the hands of the State. The bill was rejected, and its author in consequence resigned, his place being taken by Baron Zedlitz, a typical representative of the Conservative-feudalist party. To Baron Zedlitz and his friends the opportunity for a bold counter-stroke seemed too precious to be lost. The Conservatives and Clericals between them dominated the Diet, and a bargain between the two parties, which had so much in common in educational ideals, would make success certain. The Centre was, in fact, the predominant party

in the Ministerial coalition. Through persecution and discredit it had at last come to triumph and repute; it had worn down the attack upon the Church and compelled Bismarck to own defeat; now it had secured a Government to its liking, and it exercised a decisive voice in parliamentary affairs.

The bargain having been concluded, Baron Zedlitz introduced early in 1892 an amended bill which would have deliberately handed over the elementary schools to the Churches as the legitimate spoils of party warfare, to be divided amongst them at leisure by friendly arrangement. Not only was the confessional basis of the schools recognized as before, but obstacles were placed in the way of any future deviation from it; dogmatic religious instruction was to be forced upon all children, regardless of parental scruples; clerical influence, both in the work of inspection and of general administration, was increased; the clergy were to be allowed to certify whether teachers were competent or not to give religious instruction, and virtually to withhold the right to teach from any one objectionable to them. In short, the Church, Catholic and Protestant, was to be given complete control over the only part of public education in which it took serious interest.

The bill proved too much for the habitual complacency of the Prussian nation, which for once threw off its political apathy. The old leader of National Liberalism, Bennigsen, now emerged from retirement, raised again the flag of progress, and called upon all that had life and breath in the Liberalism of the monarchy to fight the measure to the death. The universities, so often silent in the past when violence had been done to intellectual interests of which they were the natural custodians, rained protests upon the Government. Lay Protestants everywhere, in public meeting and written petition, roundly condemned the bill as a complete capitulation to Clericalism and another and a more humiliating journey to Canossa. Even Bismarck accused his old party friends of having sold themselves into the service of their country's enemy. It was in vain that the Minister-President, Caprivi, who still knew less about politics than about the army, pleaded that the nation was engaged in a struggle between Christianity and atheism. The retort of the opponents of the bill, that if it was right now to place so much power in the hands of the Roman Church and clergy all the agitation against Clericalism in the last

decade was either an imposture or a piece of intolerant persecution, was unanswerable.

It was obvious that Caprivi had allowed the bill to slip through his fingers unguardedly, and that he now defended it only out of loyalty to an unpopular colleague and regard for the unity of the Cabinet. Other Ministers were not so scrupulous, and as soon as it became evident that the bill was detested they hastened to disown it. When the storm had raged until March the Emperor intervened and called upon his Ministers to surrender. Reproached by his Sovereign for having shown so little regard for national sentiment, Baron Zedlitz could only resign, whereupon the bill was withdrawn. Caprivi likewise felt seriously compromised, and chivalrously offered to accompany the unlucky Minister of Education into retirement, but the crisis demanded no such sacrifice. He retired from the presidency of the Prussian Ministry, however, and Count Botha zu Eulenburg took his place. The disrepute suffered by the Ministry and its head in Prussia was soon afterwards effaced by a notable success in imperial affairs. This was the episode of the commercial treaties of 1892 and succeeding years. When William II came to the throne the agricultural duties had just been increased, for the second time since 1879, by the customs tariff law of 1887. The revised tariff had been introduced by Bismarck in part by way of retaliation upon Austria and Russia for having increased their duties upon manufactured goods. As a weapon of offence it failed, for these countries now raised their tariffs still further. At that time some of the leading Continental States had adopted conventional tariffs on the principle of reciprocal concessions in every individual case. Germany had hitherto had a general tariff and had concluded commercial treaties only on the most-favoured-nation basis. These treaties all expired in the year 1892. Faced now by hostile tendencies in other countries, Caprivi had to choose between the alternatives of a retaliatory increase of the German duties according to need, leading almost inevitably to a series of tariff wars, or the acceptance and possible extension of the conventional tariff system, which meant some mitigation of the existing duties. He chose the latter course, and in doing so carried the Emperor with him.

Other considerations spoke in favour of the change. A strong reaction against the severe system of Protection which had been built up in the course of twelve years had already set in, and of late there

had been serious manifestations of popular discontent. The year 1891 saw Germany in the throes of scarcity. The harvest had failed; the price of wheat and rye had risen to an alarming height; and hunger stalked through the streets of the industrial towns, gaunt and menacing. In August the exportation of corn was prohibited; the corn duties were suspended in the presence of an imminent famine; and so impressed were the leaders of the agrarian party in the Diet by the anomaly of their position, that they voted for the reversal of their own policy. It was the low corn prices of 1878 that made protective duties possible; the high prices of 1891 made them for the time being impossible. Nevertheless, the crisis did not pass over without violence. Not since the memorable "March days" of 1848 had Berlin been the scene of such alarming popular demonstrations and riots as took place there in the closing days of February, 1892. Hunger and want of work were the main causes of the outbreaks, and for several days a reign of terror prevailed in certain quarters of the city. Some of the streets fell into the hands of the mob; shops and houses were looted; property was destroyed wholesale; obnoxious persons were victimized; the police were set at defiance; and the wildest elements of the population for a time held sway.

On the industrial side also the tariff had proved no less irksome and unsatisfactory. Foreign trade had greatly increased, yet the retaliatory duties adopted by other countries had done much injury. Russia and America had virtually barred their doors to the outside world. The growth of the Colonial Federation movement in England had also given rise in German minds to the apprehension that almost the only remaining free markets might soon be closed. The uncertainty of international trade, the perpetual unrest, and indefinite fears as to the future conspired to make the Government, conscious of encouragement from the commercial classes, willing to bargain with any country which was prepared to meet concession with concession.

It was the merit of Caprivi that he was the earliest of leading German statesmen to recognize that Germany had ceased to be a purely agricultural State, and that her future prosperity and welfare were bound up with the development of her industrial resources. He was no political economist, but it was a true economic instinct that led him to the conclusion, "With our increasing population we must export either goods or men." Germany was, in fact, exporting men at

that time to the extent of 100,000 a year. Yet Caprivi was not hostile to agriculture, but regarded its maintenance in an efficient and prosperous condition as a paramount national interest, and hence he favoured the continuance of moderate protection. One of his forecasts received such a remarkable confirmation many years later that it deserves to be recalled. “It is my unshakable conviction,” he told the Diet in December, 1891, “that in a future war the feeding of the army and the country may play an absolutely decisive part. I am convinced that we need to cultivate corn to such an extent that it will, in case of need, be sufficient to feed the increasing population, even if it be with restrictions, in the event of war.” Nevertheless, he held that the existing duties were a needless hindrance to industrial expansion, an oppressive burden on the working classes, and a menace to social harmony.

The discovery that industry and labour had a right to consideration equally with agriculture was the origin of the commercial treaties of 1892-4. Germany had had commercial treaties for a generation, but the treaties of the Caprivi régime marked a novel departure from past custom. The old treaties were based on fixed, invariable, autonomous tariffs, and most of them included the most-favoured-nation clause; the new ones, while containing this clause, were based on “conventional” tariffs, concluded as the result of special bargaining with the States concerned. He began negotiations with Austria, Italy, Switzerland, and Belgium. In regard to the first of these countries political considerations as well as economic influenced him, for Austria was an ally whose friendship it was desirable to strengthen. By the agreement concluded Germany was to reduce her agricultural duties and Austria her duties on industrial products. All these four treaties contained the most-favoured-nation clause, and by special tariffs fixed the duties on both sides until the end of 1903; that is, for a period of twelve years. The effect was to reduce the duties on wheat and rye from 50s. to 35s. a ton, on oats from 40s. to 28s., on barley from 22s. 6d. to 20s., and on flour from 105s. to 75s. The treaties were laid before the Diet in December, 1891, and in spite of vehement opposition from the Conservative agrarians they were ratified in the following month by 243 votes against only 48. The result was a great triumph for Caprivi, and industrial and commercial Germany was not slow or ungrudging in its gratitude. The Emperor’s

recognition of his achievement took the form of a title; the soldier statesman became a Count.

In the course of the next two years treaties were concluded on the same principles with Spain, Roumania, Serbia and Russia, and with other countries later. France came into the arrangement automatically in virtue of the Treaty of Frankfort, under which the two States agreed to accord to each other most favoured-nation treatment.

The treaty with Russia, which ended a tariff war between the two countries, was carried against the vehement opposition of the Conservatives and Anti-Semites, joined by most of the Imperialists, a minority of the Clericals, and a handful of National Liberals. It was an irony of Caprivi's position that though a Conservative by conviction and instincts he was, in the episode of the commercial treaties, thrown almost entirely upon the support of his political antagonists.

Bismarck, in his retreat at Friedrichsruh, spoke of the commercial treaties as a "leap in the dark." To the Free Trader they were a leap back into the light, and events seemed to support this view. By general consent the remarkable expansion of home industry and foreign trade which immediately followed was due in large measure to the policy of freer exchange which was introduced at this time. During the ten years from 1894 the value of Germany's trade with the treaty countries increased by nearly three-quarters. The benefit to agriculture took the form of a higher standard of life for the great mass of the working classes, with the result of a larger and more receptive home market for farm produce.

The year from which the first of the Caprivi commercial treaties dated (1892) witnessed the beginnings of a powerful organization of the agricultural interests of the country and of a new political movement destined to acquire a sinister influence and fame. The organization was the Farmers' League (*Bund der Landwirte*), and the movement for which it stood was agrarianism. Essentially representative of the large proprietors, and inspired and led by the corn-growers of Eastern Prussia, the Farmers' League captured the agricultural classes in all parts of the country, though in the North to a greater extent than in the South. It was Caprivi's declaration, in a speech in which he commended the commercial treaty policy to the Diet, that "Germany is no longer an agricultural but an industrial country," that for the first time opened the eyes of the agrarians to the

economic revolution which had passed over the country. No sooner had the treaties been ratified than they began a vehement agitation against them in the rural constituencies. “We must tear up the treaties with Austria and Italy,” said the time-honoured champion of law and order in the Press, the Kreuzzeitung, and later, when the treaty with Russia came into existence amid the Sovereign’s felicitations, it asserted that “the German farmer will now be inclined to regard the Emperor as his political enemy.”

From that time the agrarians closed their ranks for the strenuous defence of their threatened privileges, and the course of later domestic politics has been greatly influenced by their action. From the first the Agrarian League, as the Farmers’ League is usually called out of Germany, was a signal success as a propagandist organization. The German Peasants’ League uniting with it, a membership of 200,000 was soon gained, and having at command abundant funds, it was able to engage a large staff of lecturers, who perambulated the country, organizing the agricultural classes, enlightening them upon their grievances, and helping them to apply to the Government effective and continuous pressure, so supporting the hands of the party which existed to protect their special interests in Parliament.

From the beginning the organization was Conservative both in aims and in composition, and one immediate result was to create in the Conservative parliamentary party an unaccustomed spirit of independence. Hitherto the party had worked hand in hand with the Government in virtue of an alliance based on reciprocity of interest. So long as the reciprocity lasted, so long also did the alliance. When, however, both the Emperor and the Government showed a disposition to shrink from the agrarians’ extreme demands, the traditional devotion of the Conservative party to throne, altar, and fatherland stood revealed in its true light as a very human yet very unamiable piece of egoism. Thereupon were developed a discrimination of judgment and a freedom of action which had never been seen before in the same quarter. For now the agrarians, too, chose to follow a new course, and by persevering in it they gained in the end all the preference lost in 1892, with much that they had never possessed or dared to hope for in the past.

Largely owing to the parliamentary pressure which they were able to employ, a number of important measures, some of a very partisan

kind, were passed in the interest of agriculture during the next few years. Naturally most was done in Prussia, where the agrarian party entirely controlled the legislature. There laws were passed to facilitate the creation with the help of State credit of small holdings on a method which allowed the owner to redeem the purchase price by annual payments within a fixed period. Liberal State subsidies were made to encourage the construction of light railways and the improvement of the land by drainage, irrigation, and manurial works on scientific principles. Experimental farms were established for the encouragement of better methods of farming. State development boards were formed and large grants of public money made for the purpose of reclaiming marshes, moors, and other waste lands in various parts of the country. By a law of 1894 Chambers of Agriculture were formed as a connecting tie between the Government and the agricultural classes; in 1895 a State co-operative bank was created with a capital of a million pounds – afterwards increased to nearly four millions – for the encouragement of co-operative efforts; and by the reform of State taxation real estate was relieved of some of its ancient burdens. Something was done also to introduce a freer civic life in the rural districts of the backward eastern provinces by the Rural District Ordinance of 1891, which assimilated the system of local government in these districts to that prevailing in the western part of the monarchy. Nevertheless, there still remain in the East of Prussia many thousands of independent manorial districts, where the spirit of feudalism lingers in local administration, to the discomfort and injury of the whole population.

The legislative measures passed by the Imperial Government at that time, partly from love of but more from fear of the agrarians, included a Usury Law (1893) which restored the principles which were in force up to 1867; an extension of the sugar bounty system; and the abolition of the “identity certificates” in connection with rebates of duty in respect of reimported corn. These “identity certificates” had originally entitled exporters of foreign corn which had already borne duty to a rebate of corresponding amount. Later, proof of identity was no longer required, and the rebate was made in respect of any corn, of whatever origin, sold abroad; and step by step the privilege was so abused until corn exporters were allowed to import to the value of their rebate certificates not merely corn, but

rice, coffee, and petroleum. The result of this arrangement was that in times of good harvests the corn grower exported his surplus grain and imported in return marketable goods free of duty, receiving the duty as profit and at the same time reducing stocks at home and thus keeping up prices. To the most daring demand of the agrarians, however, the Government refused to yield. This was the proposal of Count Kanitz, an East Prussian landowner, that the State should purchase outright all the corn imported into the country, and retail it at a price based on the average of the past forty years, the idea being that the price so fixed should regulate the sale of the home produce. The vote of the Diet was challenged on the proposal for the first time in 1894, but unsuccessfully, and later attempts had the same result, though a hundred agrarians supported it in 1895.

The agrarian movement synchronized with another aberration of party life even more unhealthy, though, as it proved, less permanent. It began with a violent outbreak of anti-Semitism in 1890. There had been an outbreak of the kind some years before, yet, though widespread, its manifestations were in the main of a crude and futile order. In the meantime the Berlin Court chaplain Dr. Stöcker had begun to mix anti-Semitism with religious and social reform work, and assisted by an eloquent tongue he had gained a large and influential following, and prepared ground favourable to the growth of this form of political intolerance. Now an agitation of a more serious kind took hold of the inflammable sections of the community, and for the first time led to the formation of a parliamentary group pledged to the advocacy of exceptional measures against the Jewish population. In 1892, under the leadership of an elementary school teacher named Ahlwardt, who carried the fiery cross of racial hatred through North and Central Germany, the anti-Semites formed a powerful organization for the defence of Germanism against Jewry. Everywhere Ahlwardt was acclaimed as an emancipator whose mission it was to destroy the oppressive yoke of the Jewish moneylender and trader. His imprisonment at the instance of a manufacturer of the alien race, who had objected to the use of slander as a weapon against him, only served to increase his reputation, and at last his following became so large that a separate political party, duly authenticated with programme and electioneering organization, was formed, and in the elections of 1893 a large number of constituencies were fought by

Ahlwardt's friends on the alluring issue of Gentile *versus* Jew. In the Diet five deputies had already sat as avowed anti-Semites, though they had not been returned by a compact anti- Semite vote. Now more than a quarter of a million electors voted for anti-Semitic candidates, of whom sixteen were returned, Ahlwardt himself by two constituencies. Most of these successes were only possible because of the help given by the Conservative party, which had meanwhile introduced in its revised programme of 1892 a paragraph declaring it to be one of its foremost objects to "combat the increasing and disintegrating Jewish influence in our national life," yet they were ominous of deep-seated prejudices, capable of being exploited for dangerous ends by sharp-witted agitators.

Ahlwardt's influence waned owing to the result of an inquiry made by a parliamentary committee into certain wild charges which he had brought against fellow-deputies. The charges were found to be unfounded, and Ahlwardt apologized and was censured. The party repeated its success at the polls in the three succeeding elections, yet in the Diet it never obtained serious influence, and more and more it lost reputation for everything except extravagance. When, however, it disappeared as a separate organization, the spirit which called it into existence still remained as vigorous as ever in the Conservative ranks. Before this Stöcker had fallen into disrepute. "Politics is good and religion is good, but they make a bad mixture," said Matthew Arnold, and this the Court chaplain found to his cost. During the short reign of the Emperor Frederick he had been required to choose between abandoning his political agitation and resigning his office as Court and cathedral preacher. He had promised to eschew politics, but had continued his old associations, though for a time parading his sympathies less openly than before. Constant quarrelling with the Jews brought him into many unpleasant situations, amongst them law-court episodes, which did not dignify his spiritual office, and this he was required to vacate in 1890. Henceforth he devoted himself exclusively to parliamentary life and a many-sided political agitation for which the metropolis served as an effective base. Perhaps of modern German political leaders none enjoyed to a fuller extent the attachment of his party associates or drew upon himself in greater measure the antipathy of his opponents than this eloquent divine, who for twenty years was pre-eminently a dividing force in the social life

of Prussia.

The Emperor had not been long upon the throne before it became evident that military measures would retain the old prominence in domestic politics. In 1890 a momentous change in the foreign situation occurred, making it necessary that Germany should for the future rely upon her own strength even more than in the past. This was the abandonment of the reinsurance treaty with Russia, under which each Power had undertaken to be neutral in the event of the other being attacked. Rebuffed and without an ally, Russia turned to France, who had long been waiting for this turn of events, and henceforth Germany had to reckon with the possibility of war on two fronts. The outlook was further darkened by the active military measures which were being taken at that time by France. A new law of 1891 had given to France a larger yearly addition to the army than Germany had made with her much greater population. In order to correct this inequality the German military authorities now proposed to enforce liability to serve more thoroughly than hitherto. It was estimated that in this way 70,000 more men would be added to the army yearly. The crux of the question, however, was the additional cost, for this would be three and a half million pounds a year, and the assent of the Diet to so large an additional expenditure was uncertain.

In 1890, midway in the new septennial period, Caprivi had obtained an increase of 18,000 to the peace strength. In November, 1892, a bill was introduced making a further addition of 70,000 for five and a half years, bringing the total to 479,- 000, exclusive of non-commissioned officers, the number of whom was henceforth to be fixed in the army estimates each year. It was part of the scheme that service in the infantry was henceforth to be reduced to two years. The bill was rejected by the combined votes of the Clericals, who were still smarting under the affront which had been inflicted upon them by the abandonment of the Prussian School Bill, the Radicals, and the Social Democrats, whereupon the Government, rather than alter its programme, determined to take the verdict of the electorate. New elections took place in June, 1893, and were chiefly notable for the fact that the Agrarian League for the first time entered the political arena as a body of rough-riders in the service of extreme Conservatism. The result left the position of the larger party groups but little changed, though the Radicals suffered severely. To every

new report of the defection and diminution of his followers the clever but unteachable leader of this party, Eugen Richter, only answered with James II's "Est-ce possible?" and continued on his un changing way, vainly hoping to capture the electors by an arid policy of obstruction and negation. Once again he brilliantly led the Radical party to defeat, for it emerged from the contest reduced by one-half and sorely chastened. The Government secured a majority, small but sufficient to save the bill, which was passed in July. By it the peace strength was fixed until March 31, 1899, at the figure originally proposed, exclusive of about 77,000 non-commissioned officers, and in spite of the opposition of the Conservatives the period of service was reduced by a year, a condition insisted on by the Clericals as the price of their support, which was still essential to the Government. Numerically the German army was now no larger than the French and considerably smaller than the Russian, but it was the fixed conviction and the boast of the military party that in efficiency, and particularly in quality of officers and non-commissioned officers, it excelled both of its rivals.

Nor was Caprivi immune from financial worries. The increase of the army threw the Empire still more upon matricular contributions, and in the financial year 1893-1894 these contributions exceeded by two million pounds the assignment made to the States from the revenue from the customs and excise duties. Hence new taxation was imposed with a view to raising an additional five million pounds a year. Before this, important reforms had been introduced in the taxation of sugar (1891), but not primarily for the sake of revenue. The old excise duty on raw materials was abolished, and the duty on the manufactured article was correspondingly increased. The revenue derived from sugar taxation had hitherto been diminished by drawbacks upon exports, which had developed into an elaborate system of bounties. The new law changed the basis of the export bounties, which henceforth were to be given openly as such, but to be reduced from August 1, 1895, and abolished two years later.

In the event this radical measure was found impracticable at the time prescribed, since bounties remained in force in competing countries. A law of 1895, therefore, repealed the provisions as to reduction and abolition, and in the following year the bounties were doubled, while simultaneously, with a view to checking over-

production, all output beyond a specified amount was made subject to a special duty. With the conclusion of the Brussels Sugar Convention of March 5, 1902, the bounties were finally abolished and the duties were reduced.

The finances of Prussia were also successfully reorganized at this time by Dr. Miquel, one of the new men called to the Ministry by William II, and the first of two provincial mayors to hold the office of Prussian Minister of Finance during his reign. Miquel was an ex-republican who had taken part in the revolutionary movements of 1848. Later he became transformed into a useful parliamentarian, and as a member of the National Liberal party and a colleague of his fellow-Hanoverian Bennigsen he gave valuable help in the drafting of the Civil Code. When he became Minister in 1890 he found the finances of the country in desperate straits and the system of State and local taxation out of harmony with modern conditions. Between the years 1891 and 1895, by a series of masterly reforms, he succeeded in giving the Treasury a greatly increased revenue without exciting any violent antagonisms. This he did by shrewdly conciliating the agrarian majority in the Diet, for while he increased the income tax and made it progressive, he renounced the State land and building taxes, as well as the trade tax, and handed them over to the communes. The effect of the transformation of the land tax was to relieve the large landed proprietors, who saved far more by the abolition of the State tax than they had henceforth to pay in the form of a new local rate. Equally valuable in its way was his reform of municipal taxation, the effect of which was to place within the reach of local authorities novel and remunerative sources of revenue.

So long as he kept to finance Dr. Miquel was a great success, but as a colleague he was not beloved by the rest of the Cabinet. Like many politicians who, after sowing wild oats, have sobered with years, he became a reactionary, and he was never tired of giving proof of his repentance, forgetting that his rush to the other extreme, far from covering up the sins of his youth, only brought them more to remembrance. As a Minister he earned a fatal reputation for disloyalty and self-seeking. He encouraged the agrarians in resisting the Caprivi commercial treaties and in throwing out a Prussian Canal Bill introduced at a later date. No one doubted his great abilities, though no one rated them so highly as himself. The impression which he

made upon his contemporaries was that of a push ing egoist, fighting for his own hand; he thrilled for recognition, and was so convinced of his cleverness that he aspired to supplant two successive Chancellors, and did not hesitate to intrigue to that end. His ambition was in the end his undoing.

The Army Law of 1893 was the last important achievement of Caprivi's Government. He had not desired office, and the longer he held it the less it attracted him. Moreover, he had made enemies in many quarters. The Clericals had not forgiven him for failing to carry the Prussian School Bill; the East African treaty of 1890 and his general attitude towards imperialism had embittered the colonial party against him; ever since the conclusion of the commercial treaties he had been marked out for the vindictive attacks of the agrarians; and the military party, which had intrigued against him for some time, made his concession of two years' service a pretext for open hostility.

On the other hand, Caprivi had a genuine grievance against the Emperor which had for a long time been growing more acute. He had spent most of his life in services in which loyalty is proverbial and obedience almost an instinct, yet before two years passed he had begun to resent the Emperor's habit of talking too freely, of saying one thing in his official capacity and another in private intercourse, so that misunderstandings occurred. He had even had to complain that he was at times entirely ignored in important matters of State. Bismarck was wont to commit the first Emperor to important acts and tell him afterwards, and it was the constant complaint of William I, so long as complaining availed, that he was kept in the dark. The third Emperor reversed this practice; he formed the habit of adopting decisions and acting upon them on his own initiative and without conferring with his Chancellor.

Incidents of the kind constantly came to public knowledge, and the effect was to weaken the Government, discredit its head, and to create strong prejudice against the Emperor in widening circles, which deplored his activity in politics as bad for the country and contrary to the spirit of the constitution. More emphatically than the old Emperor he made it clear that the policy of the Government was his policy, and that failure to support it implied want of loyalty to his person. "Dishonoured be the man who deserts his King," were the words in

which, at Königsberg, he rallied the nobles and gentry of East Prussia in September, 1894, when some of their number had united to defeat a Canal Bill which was intended to join the Rhine and Elbe and thus make it possible to convey corn by inland waterway from the extreme West to the extreme East of the kingdom. When the Prussian Lower House refused to increase the salary of the Chief of the Royal Cabinet, the Emperor-King, in sign of disapprobation, promptly conferred upon that official a high order, an act of which so staunch a Conservative statesman as Herr von Kardorff, the leader of the Imperialist party, spoke as "a demonstration against the constitution."

Never since the Prussian "Conflict time" of thirty years before had political passions been so stirred as now over the Emperor's attempt to reduce his constitutional Ministers to ciphers and to take the government both of the monarchy and the Empire into his own hands. It was in vain that he besought the nation not to place party considerations above the welfare of the community, so long as he himself pursued a policy which played directly into the hands of one party, and could only succeed by its acquiescence – the party that hated constitutional government and had no more ardent wish than to see it discredited and destroyed. Writing of the first years of the reign of Frederick William IV, Treitschke says that they were "a long chain of misunderstandings, and for this mutual misjudgement the King was as much to blame as the fermentative tendency of the time." The words faithfully describe the strained relations between ruler and people which began shortly after Bismarck's fall and never again entirely disappeared. For the first time it became impossible to keep the Emperor's name out of parliamentary debates, and the dignity of the Crown was not increased by the plain speaking of democratic deputies to whom the only sacred things in political life were the constitution and the rights which it conferred upon the nation. Outside the Diet the criticism took forms even less discriminating, and there occurred a contagion of prosecutions for *lèse-majestè* such as had never been known before. And yet no ruler was ever more desirous of standing well with his people. He craved for popularity, and resented every indication of flagging attachment as a personal wrong.

For a time the strain was relieved by the Emperor's reconciliation with Bismarck, who in token of the happy event visited Berlin at the beginning of 1894 (January 26th) for the first time since his

banishment nearly four years before, and there paid his respects at the royal castle. The reconciliation was not sincere on either side; on the Emperor's it was a pure act of policy, a concession to political necessity, and an attempt to restore a popularity which had been severely tried. Talking with Hohenlohe in the evening of the reconciliation day, which for the nation was one of universal rejoicing, he said: "Now they can erect triumphal arches for him in Vienna and Munich, for I am always a horse's length ahead of him." When told that the "rabid Bismarckians" thought that it was his duty to go to Friedrichsruh, he rejoined: "I know, but they would have had to wait; long enough for that. It was for him to come here."

Caprivi had done his best to bring about an understanding, and he was deeply mortified that the Emperor had made the first approaches to Bismarck without consulting him. He told Hohenlohe of the affront, and that diarist comments: "He bears it resignedly; I should not like to be Chancellor under such conditions." Caprivi bore his humiliations until October of that year, and then was allowed at his own wish to pass quietly into retirement, Count Eulenburg simultaneously resigning the Presidency of the Prussian Ministry. He had served his country efficiently and devotedly, and he took back into private life an unblemished reputation, with the good-will of all men capable of appreciating unselfish public service. History affords examples of statesmen to whose public words and acts the only safe clue has been a presumption of ambiguous or unscrupulous motive, yet also of statesmen who have always seemed to do the right thing by instinct and whose very probity and sincerity have exposed them to misjudgement by the unthinking crowd. To this smaller band of rare spirits Caprivi belonged. He died on February 24, 1899, at the age of sixty-eight.

With Caprivi's resignation Prince Hohenlohe's turn came at last, and he accepted the Chancellorship, and with it the Presidency of the Prussian Ministry, without demur (October 27th), though he would have done it with far greater satisfaction four years before. In the management of foreign affairs he had the assistance of Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, still Secretary of State at the Foreign Office, with Herr von Bülow, but lately installed in the diplomatic service, as his lieutenant.

Hohenlohe's appointment was a reward of long-proved fidelity in

the service of the State, as well as of patience and perseverance. It was also a compliment to kinship, for he was the Emperor's uncle. He had special qualifications for the great office of Imperial Prime Minister, an office requiring far less than in democratically governed countries that its occupant shall be all things to all men. He was emphatically and in the best sense a diplomatist, with a proper appreciation of the cardinal virtues of diplomacy – faith, hope, and silence. His training in high politics had given him the statesman's judgment and breadth of view, while his residence abroad had added a valuable acquaintance with the life, ways, and political thought of other nations which is more desirable than usual in Ministers who have to conduct foreign relationships. Moreover, he had already in 1880 acted as head of the Foreign Office under Bismarck, and no man was more in the confidence of that statesman. Finally, his scholarship and bent for philosophy added greatly to his reputation with a Diet whose erudition recalled the British House of Commons of the pre-Reform era, and whose greatest weakness as a legislative body was that its ponderous wisdom smacked too much of the study and of midnight oil.

To all but the East Prussian phalanx it was a further merit in him that he was a South German, with all the South German's flexibility of mind and none of his exaggerated devotion to the "narrow fatherland." His political views were those of a Liberal conscious that in a country of vigorous monarchies the limits of Liberal policy are very narrowly defined. In personal relationships he represented the high traditions of race and breeding: however he might differ from his opponents or they from him, he could always be relied on to carry the etiquette of private into public life, for as were his instincts so were his manners – those of a chivalrous gentleman.

It was a fine tribute to the character of Hohenlohe, in a time when even men of honour found it difficult to follow the path of courage, that he had not allowed Bismarck's fall to interfere with their old friendship, and that though in 1890 Caprivi had taken the place which he thought should have been his own, he gave to that "dignified, honourable and loyal man," as he called him, all the assistance within his power. His long co-operation with the first Chancellor now proved a valuable recommendation with the Conservatives, for it encouraged in them the hope that he would divert national policy back into the

old course. Hohenlohe's principal drawback was his age, for with his seventy-five years he had reached a time of life when men, and pre-eminently statesmen, are apt to look backward rather than forward, to value tranquillity more than action. Moderate in judgment and equable in temper, he made an earnest attempt to work harmoniously with the two Diets, and for a time he succeeded. His diplomatic training had taught him patience. When he failed to obtain his way he did not threaten dissolution, but accepted failure with the same equanimity as success; if a bill was rejected, he simply waited and tried again another day.

Hohenlohe took with him to Berlin, to be the Prussian Minister of the Interior, a dashing official of the Strassburg corps in whom he had great confidence, Herr E. M. von Köller. A reactionary bureaucrat who sailed under progressive colours, it was this adviser who caused him to commit two inexplicably rash acts at the very outset of his career as Chancellor. At the close of the ceremony connected with the opening of the new Imperial Diet buildings on December 6th cheers were called for the Emperor in the usual way. To the disgust of the loyal parties, the Socialists remained silent and seated. Forgetting that the Diet was governed only by its own laws, Hohenlohe a few days later asked it for permission to prosecute the more prominent offenders for *lèse-majesté*, and received a prompt and indignant refusal.

Later in the same month he made a still more inexcusable mistake. Ever since the Socialist Law had fallen the North German Conservatives had worked, in season and out of season, for the renewal of its coercive provisions in some new form. As another law directly aimed at Socialism seemed for the present out of the question, they endeavoured to reach the same end by amending the Penal Law of the Empire. So long as Caprivi remained they met with no encouragement. Hohenlohe, as Stadholder of Alsace-Lorraine, had for ten years lived in an atmosphere of exceptional legislation, and one of his first Ministerial acts was to capitulate to the reactionaries, perhaps more from habit than from conviction. The Antirevolution Bill (*Umsturzvorlage*) was accordingly introduced in the Diet in December, 1894. Without mentioning Socialism, it was intended in the good old-fashioned way to penalize all endeavours to "subvert the existing social order." In the hope of capturing the support of the Clerical party, which had suffered too much from exceptional laws to be

willing to coerce others because of their political convictions, a clause was introduced making illegal all attacks upon religion, marriage, and the family tie. The bill reached the committee stage, but it never had a chance of success, and when it came back to the full House in the following May it was summarily rejected.

It was the new Chancellor's first and last experiment in coercing political opinion upon an imperial scale. When by constant contact he came to understand the Prussian reactionaries more thoroughly, he refused either to assist their designs or to throw himself unduly upon their support. Their success in compassing Caprivi's downfall, however, had fired the Conservatives at this time with new and bolder ambitions, and during 1895 a well-organized agitation against the imperial franchise was carried on by the party Press, which openly advocated a *coup d'état*. The Emperor and Government were bidden to give the Diet the opportunity of annulling this emblem of popular government voluntarily if so minded, but in default of its so doing they were to abolish both the franchise and the Diet together, and a dictatorship was to be established until further notice. Against such indiscreet counsels even Bismarck, in his seclusion, warmly protested, urging his countrymen to hold fast by the old ways.

During Hohenlohe's Chancellorship there was a lull in domestic legislation, for much of the ardour which had been thrown into social reform had been diverted to unfruitful political controversy. The agrarians were as persistent as ever, but, strive as they would, they were impotent to undo the commercial treaties, which blocked any interference with the customs tariff until 1904. Nevertheless, a few useful laws of a minor kind were passed for their benefit, including the Stock Exchange Law of 1896 prohibiting dealings in futures, in corn and flour, supplemented in Prussia by a law which empowered the Chambers of Agriculture to co-operate in the management of the produce exchanges, and a drastic law relating to the sale of margarine (1897). In Prussia large Government subsidies were granted in 1896, and 1897 towards the erection of elevators in the corn-growing districts; while by the reform of State taxation already mentioned real estate was relieved of some of its ancient burdens. The small tradesmen benefited by imperial laws against unfair competition and regulating the practice of selling goods on the payment-by-instalment principle; while housing reform was encouraged by the grant in 1895

of the first of a series of large votes of money for the provision of cheap dwellings for workmen in State employment.

In 1896 there was completed the *magnum opus* of German jurisprudence since the establishment of the Empire, the Civil Code, upon which the cleverest lawyers of the land had worked for twenty years. The union of Germany in 1871 disclosed the existence of a hopeless medley of legal systems. The Prussian Common Law of 1794 was in force only in the old provinces of the monarchy; in the Western provinces and in the Western and Southern States generally the Code Napoléon applied; Saxony had a Code of its own; the Austrian Code of 1811 applied to portions of Bavaria; and in Prussian Pomerania there were still relics of Swedish Law. Moreover, many of the minor territories, and even the City Republics, had legal and judicial systems of their own marked by important variations and peculiarities. One of the first acts of the Imperial Government in 1871 was to appoint a commission to draw up rules of civil and criminal procedure and a scheme for the organization of the law-courts. The recommendations of this commission were published in the following year, but it was 1879 before agreement was arrived at between the North and South and the necessary laws could be passed. Meanwhile, the larger question of the codification of the civil law had been taken in hand. A commission of experts worked upon this great task from 1874 to 1890, when a new commission was appointed to revise its recommendations. Not until August, 1896, was the Civil Code of the Empire enacted, with full force as, from January 1, 1900. This great law expressed the unity of the nation as nothing else had done – neither armies, nor railways, nor posts – and with its consummation the last traces of the old disruption may be said to have been obliterated.

An attempt was made by the Socialist and Liberal parties to obtain the introduction into the Civil Code of provisions enlarging the existing very limited right of association and public meeting, and so protecting the working classes against the arbitrary action of the State Governments. Although the Socialist Law was no more, the omnipotence of the police authorities left but little liberty of political agitation, and the old laws were sufficiently stringent, when narrowly interpreted, to make even trade union activity difficult and ineffectual. In the summer of 1895 a private bill, which would have empowered

labour organizations to federate, given to men and women full right of coalition and assembly, and greatly reduced the controlling powers of the police, passed through committee; but it had to be abandoned in the final stages owing to the resolute opposition of the Conservative groups. When a year later a large majority of the Diet agreed upon a bill of a single paragraph, legalizing the federation of national associations and repealing all State laws in a contrary sense, the Federal Governments in turn refused assent.

The only hope remaining was that the same provision might be added to the Civil Code, now nearing completion. A majority of the Diet was in favour of this course, but now Prince Hohenlohe objected. He regarded the provision itself as reasonable and necessary, but contended that it related to private and not to public right, and hence would be out of place in the Civil Code. Moreover, he was able to assure the Diet that the Governments of the States were themselves about to abolish the prohibition of federation between political associations where it still existed, and he promised that Prussia should lead the way. The pledge thus given by the Chancellor was not fulfilled. A bill was duly produced in the Prussian Diet early in the following year, but it was wrecked by the reactionaries. The question, therefore, came back to the Imperial Diet once more, and finally Hohenlohe secured the passing in December, 1899, of a law permitting the federation of societies of all kinds throughout the Empire, whether the laws of the States allowed it or not.

The Diet showed more freedom than usual in opposing retrogressive measures about that time. In the same year it re jected a bill, pilloried by popular opprobrium as the Penal Servitude Bill, intended to protect free labour against intimidation. A year later the friends of the Anti-revolution Bill of 1895 reintroduced this measure in an even more aggressive form. For practical purposes it was a Socialist Law without the name, though it contained the old provisions intended to protect religion and its institutions and symbols against ill-mannered attack. For the Clericals, however, the bill was not extreme enough, and in their clumsy but honest championship of public morals they proposed amendments which would have established a rigorous police censorship of literature and art. Against this attempt of a narrow religious philistinism to subordinate the æsthetic tastes of Germany to the tutelage of the Vatican the nation

protested with no uncertain voice, though it was the special merit of the Socialist party to have brought about the discredit and eventual abandonment of the bill.

No such breakwater against reactionary legislation existed in the Prussian Parliament, and an encroachment upon the language rights of the Polish population of the Eastern provinces in 1900 added to the prevailing discontent there. A Government regulation dating from 1842 stipulated that instruction in the elementary schools should be given in the language spoken by the majority of the children. The result was that in many localities German made no headway, and in order to remedy this the regulation was repealed in 1872, from which time it was required that instruction in all subjects except religion should be in German. In 1900 even this reservation was cancelled in some districts which had been conspicuous for anti-Prussian agitation, with the result that Polish was excluded from the schools altogether. Polish parents answered by unteaching at home the German taught to their children at school and by insisting more and more upon the use of the proscribed language in intercourse amongst themselves and their German neighbours.

To Hohenlohe's Chancellorship fell a great measure of naval expansion, for which the preceding thirty years had been a slow preparation. Prince Bülow has paid Emperor William II a doubtful compliment by the suggestion that he embraced the idea of a large navy as an antidote to the national depression which was caused by his quarrel with the first Chancellor. "The pressure which rested on the German spirit," he writes, "could only be thrown off if the Emperor placed before the nation, which at the time lacked common hopes and wishes, a new goal, and showed it the place in the sun to which it had a right and which it ought to endeavour to attain." This is not quite accurate or just. The Emperor had taken a warm interest in the navy long before he came to the throne, and after his accession it was only preoccupation with other tasks – and not least the strengthening of the army – that prevented him from making the navy question at once a capital question of policy. Nevertheless, progress was not delayed. He became Emperor in June, 1888, and by August his naval advisers were working upon a new plan of shipbuilding, to take effect the following year; four large armoured vessels were to be asked for as the nucleus of an efficient battle fleet, and four cruisers

were to be built for special use on colonial stations. The Diet was in no mood to thwart the wishes of the new ruler, and the modest scheme was sanctioned. A further indication of a forward movement at the Admiralty was the reorganization of naval administration early in the following year. Hitherto this had been concentrated in the hands of the Chief of the Admiralty, who was also the First Sea Lord. Now the functions of supreme command and administration were separated, the former being vested in a naval officer and the latter in the Imperial Marine Board, the head of which (corresponding to the First Lord of the Admiralty) was henceforth a Secretary of State, while a Naval Cabinet was formed as a nexus between the naval administration and the First Sea Lord and between these and the Emperor. The First Sea Lord under the new *régime* was Admiral von der Goltz and the First Secretary of State for the Navy Rear- Admiral Häusner, soon succeeded by Rear-Admiral von Hollmann.

Before, however, parliamentary sanction could be obtained for a policy of shipbuilding on a large scale, public opinion needed to be educated, and this task the Emperor took upon himself and discharged with unwearying persistence and great resource. At naval launches, harbour openings, regatta junketings, on any and every occasion which furnished him with a text, he preached to the nation the need for a great sea change which was to make of Germany the strongest naval as she had already become the strongest military Power. In the meantime he devoted his attention to the improvement of the fleet he had. He sought to create in the navy new traditions, a new code of discipline, a new *esprit de corps* and *moral*, and ever his eyes were upon England, from whom he learned his most important naval lessons. The administration of the navy was revolutionized; the conditions of service were revised, and training was adapted to modern conditions. Hitherto training had been confined to home waters and to the summer months, and during winter the ships were put out of commission and laid up. Now the fleet was turned out into the open sea, and evolutions and manœuvring on a large scale, with sham fights, became part of the regular routine all the year round. All past comparisons of the German with other navies had been limited to France, Russia, and Italy; the superiority of the British navy had been assumed as self-evident. From 1890 forward the comparison became one with England; all other navies had become for Germany of

secondary importance.

The year which thus marked a new era in German naval policy saw Germany also committed to untried ways in high politics, for Bismarck now ceased to be Chancellor, and the young Emperor, taking the helm in his own hand, ordered the ship of State to go "full steam ahead" upon a "new course." It was in July of the same year that Great Britain ceded Heligoland to Germany, on whose behalf the Emperor hailed the Elbe island as "a bulwark by sea, a protection for German fishermen, a base for my ships of war, and a shield and shelter for the German Ocean against every enemy who may venture to show himself upon it." Five years later the Kiel Canal was completed and opened (June, 1895). Both of these events were of vital importance for the creation of a navy that was to be of real value as a fighting force. From the beginning of the reign the expenditure upon the navy had gradually increased until it had grown from two and a half to five million pounds a year. The amount was thus still moderate, for Hollmann had resisted the strong pressure brought upon him in favour of shipbuilding on bold lines.

In 1897 reports began to circulate that Hollmann's position was uncertain. In the previous autumn it had been rumoured that one Herr Tirpitz, then a rear-admiral on service in East Africa, had laid before the Emperor a large shipbuilding project, but the *Official Gazette* denied this rumour, and even added that a rear-admiral was not in a position to make any such representations direct to his Sovereign. Early in that year Hollmann laid before the Diet a modest plan of ship-construction, to be completed in three years, yet with no suggestion that naval expenditure should be voted otherwise than for a year at once as hitherto. Both the chief of the Admiralty and the Imperial Chancellor then gave assurances that there was no ambitious scheme in the background.

Nevertheless, the idea of a large navy was already in the air. In three public utterances during 1897 the Emperor had hinted that the time had come for a further extension of naval power. When in April he deputed his brother Prince Henry, admiral of the fleet, to attend the celebrations in connection with the jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign, he publicly deplored the fact that "while other nations will shine with their proud war vessels," Germany would be represented by an old hulk. Drawing the moral, he added: "This is the sad result of

the attitude of the unpatriotic people who succeed in preventing the building of the necessary ships. But I shall not rest until my navy has been brought to the same standard as that of the army." On another occasion he used the suggestive and often-cited words, "The trident belongs in our hand." Still more urgently he declared in the speech from the throne with which he opened the Diet in November: "The development of our fleet is not equal to the tasks which Germany is compelled to impose on it. . . . While it cannot be our duty to rank with naval Powers of the first rank, Germany must be put in a position to maintain her prestige among the other nations of the world by her naval armaments. To this end it is necessary to strengthen the home fleet and to increase the number of ships needed for foreign service in time of peace."

In this speech the Government's intention to lay down a comprehensive programme of shipbuilding, with a time limit for its execution, was admitted for the first time. By this time Rear- Admiral Tirpitz had returned to Germany, and public opinion was not surprised to learn at the end of November that Hollmann had left the Admiralty and the unknown naval expert had taken his place as the Emperor's fleet-planner. Thus was formed a partnership in naval enterprise which lasted for nearly twenty years. The idea of a strong navy, which should at need be able to give the army effective support and prove powerful in offensive as well as defensive warfare, was the Emperor's. It fell to Tirpitz to put this idea into concrete form, reorganize the navy in accordance with it, and carry through the Diet, at first in the face of much hostility, but later with ever-increasing facility, a succession of measures in which it was translated into a fact.

A bill introduced at the end of the year became the first Navy Law of April, 1898, which laid down a large programme of shipbuilding, to be completed in seven years, and provided the Government with the necessary vote, in the aggregate nearly fifty million pounds. The bill was cordially supported by the Conservatives and National Liberals; the Clericals accepted rather than welcomed it; while the Radicals and Socialists, though forming a small minority, fought it tenaciously. The attitude of Hohenlohe towards this impetuous departure was not enthusiastic. He defended the bill loyally, but he did not conceal his opinion that the admirals were moving much too fast for safety. It was in reference to the Emperor's action in the matter that he wrote in his

Diary at that time (November 7th): “It is not desirable that the Emperor should disturb things by his impulsive nature. It is to be wished that he were more phlegmatic.” The opponents of the bill complained that the Diet should have been asked to give away its control over the naval estimates for so long a time, and pointed out that the imperial debt had increased by seventy million pounds since the commencement of the reign, for the most part owing to expenditure on the army and navy, and that the bill would further add to the Emperor’s indebtedness. Neither financial scruples nor the objection that by passing the bill the Diet would bind its hand for seven years availed against the appeal to patriotic spirit, and the bill duly became law.

The case for a larger navy was greatly assisted by events which were happening at the time in China. In the autumn of 1897 two German missionaries had been murdered and the German mission stations wrecked in the province of Shantung, and the German warships in East Africa waters received instructions to exact prompt expiation. Troops were accordingly landed in November, and before they re-embarked they had secured from China the bay and coast of Kiauchau, to serve as a permanent pledge of remorse and incidentally as a German naval station.

The Navy Act of 1898 was represented as marking the limit of Germany’s naval ambitions for at least seven years. The ships to be built in this time were twelve battleships, eight armoured vessels for coast defence, and ten large and twenty-three small cruisers, so that, independently of cannon boats, torpedo boats, and training ships, the navy would be increased to nineteen battleships, eight armoured coast vessels, and forty cruisers (twelve large and twenty-eight small), thirteen of these intended for foreign service. The life of armoured vessels, large cruisers, and small cruisers was fixed at twenty-five, twenty, and fifteen years respectively.

In March, 1899, a further reorganization of the naval administration was introduced. The chief command of the navy was abolished, and the Emperor became the head of the navy as of the army; but the Imperial Marine Board, directed by a Secretary of State, and the Naval Cabinet remained. Later in the year the navy which had been planned as sufficient for all purposes was already found to be inadequate. Now events again occurred which seemed to strengthen

the Emperor's contention that Germany would never be able to assert her rightful influence abroad until she was in a position to support her arguments by ships as well as bayonets. The Jameson raid of December 31, 1895, had created a strong feeling of hostility against England, particularly amongst the political and commercial members of the colonial party, who still recalled with resentment how fifteen years before timely British action had thwarted the German design of gaining a foothold in the Transvaal. This hostility was redoubled when in October, 1899, President Krüger's declaration of war precipitated the long-deferred and lamentable struggle between Briton and Boer. The attitude of the German Government during that struggle was outwardly correct, but the succeeding Chancellor, Bülow, admitted later that only the want of a strong navy prevented Germany from intervening in a way hostile to England early in the war, when for a critical moment it seemed as though she had been committed to a task beyond her power.

Instead of running risks, therefore, the Government determined to prepare for the future. Not only was the army again increased in that year, bringing its peace strength to 495,500, but a new Navy Bill was introduced. There was now no concealment of the fact that it was desired to strike a first blow, to be followed in due time by others, at England's naval supremacy. "Germany," the *exposé des motifs* said, "must have so strong a battle fleet that war, even for our most powerful naval opponent, will be attended by such dangers that its supremacy will be at stake." That these words referred to England was admitted by Admiral von der Goltz, who told the Diet: "Let us consider the idea of war with England. There is nothing improbable in it, having regard to the animosity which Germany bears towards England and to the attitude of the British nation towards all Continental Powers, and especially Germany." The entire theory of the purpose of the fleet was now changed. Hitherto it had been intended to be merely defensive; now it was to be organized avowedly for offence. "Let us continue without relaxation," the Emperor said in one of his public utterances, while the bill was under discussion, "and end quickly the work begun; so shall we impose peace on the sea also" (May, 1900). In the existing state of public feeling, the Government might have had all the ships and money it wanted, and in June the second Navy Law was passed by 201 votes against 103. Only the

Radicals and Socialists now kept up a futile resistance, and they knew that the country was against them. Prince Bülow relates how Richter, the leader of the Radical party, who had fought the colonial movement and was now fighting the naval movement, came to him one day in 1900 and said: “You will get your ships, though I should never have thought it. You may be right, but I am too old to go new ways.”

Under the new law the battle fleet was to be increased in the course of sixteen years to thirty-eight ships of the line, in four squadrons, two active and two reserve; the coast vessels provided by the first law were to be dropped, and instead of them fourteen large cruisers instead of ten and thirty-eight small cruisers instead of twenty-three were to be built; and there was also to be a fleet of eighty torpedo boats.

A large-navy agitation flooded Germany from north to south at this time, and it powerfully strengthened the hands of the Government. A Navy League had been founded under high patronage in 1898, and it soon covered the country with a network of branches, which carried the crusade into factory and workshop, school and home. By means of persistent propagandism of all kinds, by stirring appeals to patriotism, interest, and even fear, the national imagination was impressed, and the conviction brought home to the minds of the taxpayers that Germany needed all the ships the Government asked for, and that it was their duty to supply them. The Emperor could say with perfect truth in 1900: “The German nation is at one with its Princes and Emperor in the determination to mark further our powerful development by the creation of a great navy. A little later (June, 1901) he gave to the large navy party and the nation a rallying cry in words which the poet Herwegh had used just half a century before: “Our future lies on the water.”

Hardly had the second Navy Law been passed than Admiral (now von) Tirpitz prepared the country for new demands, and it responded with a readiness never excelled even in meeting the demands of the army. By this time the idea that the Government was building according to a programme and a time limit had become a pretence. If that fiction was still continued, it was only for the purpose of obtaining money more easily and of diverting the attention of foreign Governments from the capital fact, which was that Tirpitz intended to

build just as much and as fast as the Diet would allow him. Foreign critics, venturing to recall the earlier professions with which their anxiety had been allayed, were now told that what Germany did was no business of theirs. “The German nation,” the Emperor said in 1904, “has a right to maintain just such an army and navy as the protection of its interests requires, and no one will venture to prevent it developing these two forces according to its own wish and will.” The words gave definiteness to the suspicion which had for some time been forming in many minds in Great Britain that the German naval rivalry was a deliberate challenge to British sea power.

It has been convenient to follow the course of the large-navy movement into its later stages, so anticipating developments which did not belong to Hohenlohe’s Chancellorship. Although Hohenlohe, as the first Minister of the Empire, was officially responsible for the early naval schemes out of which the larger ones grew, and although he came to the conviction that “without a fleet a powerful empire is inconceivable” (June, 1900), he never allowed his patriotic feelings to destroy his sense of proportion. To the last he feared that the admirals were bent on committing the country to naval ambitions and expenditure beyond the limits of reason and safety, and his suspected lukewarmness turned against him the whole naval party and its influence with the Emperor, which was great. The generals and the military party likewise disliked him because he was not one of themselves.

More serious, however, was the hostility of the agrarian Conservatives. To make them his enemies was not difficult, for all that was necessary was to go counter to their demands. This he had done from the first on the question of Protection. The East Prussian corn-growers wanted higher duties and the abandonment of the Caprivi treaties; – how the treaties were to be denounced before the proper time was a question which did not trouble them. Like his predecessor, however, Hohenlohe recognized frankly that Germany had, for good or ill, become an industrial country, and that in any adjustment of her customs relationships the needs of the working classes, and preeminently the need of cheap food, must be carefully weighed. “We cannot admit the excessive demands of the agrarians,” he said in 1896, and therewith he sealed his doom, though as yet he knew not the day nor the hour. Before he had been Chancellor a year he had

been aware that “a number of politicians and highly placed busybodies are doing their best to discredit me with his Majesty.” A year later he had had reason to believe that his resignation was desired. “My relations with his Majesty are peculiar,” he then wrote. “Sometimes owing to his little acts of thoughtlessness and want of consideration I come to the conclusion that he purposely avoids me and that it cannot go on. Then I see him again and I think I was mistaken.” So it continued until 1900, his relations with the Emperor being “now friendly, now reserved,” though always uncertain, while the hostility directed against him from many sides increased. On October 16th of that year he resigned, judging from various signs that the step would not be unacceptable. Like Caprivi, he had ceased to be the confidant of the Emperor’s inner counsels. “How can one bear the responsibilities of office,” he said to a friend just before his resignation, “if one is not admitted into the secrets of policy?” It was a curious situation, only to be resolved in one way. He has put it on record that the Emperor had been waiting for his resignation, and had already chosen his successor.

Hohenlohe’s tenure of the Chancellorship left German politics but little changed from Caprivi’s time. His enemies complained that he did not give the country an example of “resolute action.” For that he was too old, nor did he believe that it was the country’s need. The longer he remained in office the more convinced he became that the greatest service within his power to render to Germany was to hold back the reaction, whose main strength was now derived from feudal Conservatism in the North and Clericalism in the South, and whose pressure, though from time to time relaxed, was still the most constant force in national politics. As a South German he was never thoroughly acclimatized in Prussia. He distrusted the Prussian nobles, and accused them of prostituting loyalty and patriotism to the advancement of their own interests. They were “too numerous, too powerful, and have the kingdom and the army too much on their side,” he wrote in December, 1898, and he suspected that they would have been willing to sacrifice the Empire’s unity if they could thereby have served their own ends. “As I laboured from 1866 to 1870,” he wrote, “for the union of South and North, so I must strive now to keep Prussia attached to the Empire. For all these gentlemen do not care a rap for the Empire, and would rather give it up to-day than to-morrow.”

It was good for Germany to have had at that time a Chancellor so acutely conscious of these subtle influences and of the need of holding them in check. Yet partly wrangling was not in keeping with Hohenlohe's temperament. His tastes predisposed him far more to high politics than to controversies over customs tariffs, naval programmes, and army laws; and the never-ending frictions and jars with a parliamentary majority, whose support had in every emergency to be bought at the market price of the moment, were repulsive to his fine spirit and love of probity and decorum. He was not a strong man, if tested by the characteristics to which Bismarck's pre-eminence was chiefly due, and his quiet nature constantly exposed him to a temptation to defer to the pushing men around him, and even to fall too much into the spirit of his milieu. There was a pathetic incongruity in the idea of this benign old gentleman, with the serene eye and pensive brow of the scholar, the incarnation of the civic virtues, pleading with Bismarck, while yet Stadholder of Alsace-Lorraine, that he would do his duty and maintain his dignity more successfully if only he might be given the rank of general.

Nevertheless, with all the limitations which, conjoined with his age, prevented him from becoming a really great imperial administrator, Hohenlohe filled a difficult office at a difficult time with more than passable success, and his high repute and authority in foreign affairs were to the last an asset which Germany could ill afford to lose. As his coming had been received with but a passive interest, so his going created no surprise, for all it meant was that another phantom had ceased to flit across the stage of political life; the real Chancellor still remained. He died, at the age of eighty-two, on July 6, 1901, thus surviving his retirement for an even shorter time than either of his predecessors.

EMPEROR WILLIAM II. DOMESTIC AFFAIRS, 1900-1914 - THE REACTION

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DURING THE REMAINING YEARS covered by this survey of domestic affairs the spirit which rested upon German political life was in the main a spirit of reaction, notwithstanding that the elections to the Imperial Diet in the middle of the period produced one of those recurrent revulsions of national feeling which, impressive though they may appear to outsiders, merely emphasize the impotence of the democratic parties in an undemocratic parliamentary system. The new Chancellor was Count Bernhard von Bülow, who since June 28, 1897, had been Foreign Secretary in succession to Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, on his appointment to the embassy at Constantinople. With the choice of Bülow a new type of Minister entered German parliamentary life. Both Bismarck and Hohenlohe had graduated in the diplomatic service, but of neither of them could it be said as of Bülow that he was a diplomat pure and simple. Gifted in a rare degree with the courtier's temperament, a polished man of the world of brilliant intellectual parts and fascinating address, and an accomplished orator, whose fluent periods hypnotized rather than persuaded, his strength lay less in force of conviction or will than in a large fund of astuteness, a thorough knowledge of human nature, and, above all, an incomparable acquaintance with every device and resource of the craft of politics. His defects are perhaps best indicated when it is said that, while he had none of Bismarck's rough, downright strength of character, he lacked also Caprivi's moral earnestness and Hohenlohe's grave outlook upon life and the world.

Bülow was in no doubt as to the influences which had precipitated his predecessor's retirement. The strongest of these was agrarianism, and against that rock he was determined not to break himself. The first domestic problem with which he was faced compelled him to choose whether he would have the agrarians as friends or as enemies, and as became a practised diplomat, he decided for peace. The Caprivi commercial treaties were to expire at the end of 1903. What was then to take their place? The question was one of immense importance for agriculture, and ever since the beginning of 1893 the Agrarian League had been preparing for the inevitable renewal of the fight between country and town. The question of prolonging these treaties was discussed in the Diet as early as 1897, at which time the Government set on foot the preparatory inquiries. For the conduct of these an Economic Committee was appointed, consisting of thirty persons,

fifteen nominated by the Executive and five each by the Central Association of German Industrialists, the German Agricultural Council, and the German Commercial Diet. This revisory committee, of whose members the great majority were avowed Protectionists, elaborated the tariff with a view to a greater differentiation as between various classes of goods belonging to the same group. Hence it came about that when the tariff was issued in draft form it particularized nearly a thousand classes of goods. Upon the basis of this now highly specialized "autonomous" tariff, fixing maximum rates, negotiation was to take place with each country individually. Maximum rates were well enough. But now the agrarians raised the cry for minimum rates as well. What was the good, they asked, of enacting maximum duties when it was known that they would not be maintained against a single State? It was cold comfort to talk to the farmer of a protection which was beyond his reach; he would much prefer to know the protection of which he could be quite certain.

This demand of minimum duties the Government eventually conceded in principle in the case of agriculture, and henceforth it became the purpose of agrarian agitation to fix the irreducible duties as high as possible. In this the landed party was aided by a formal *concordat* with the Central Association of German Industrialists, a Protectionist organization representing especially the large iron and textile trades, the terms of which were that the agrarians should support higher industrial duties, in return for which the Association would not be found averse to an increase of the agricultural duties. The pressure which assailed the Government was thus pressure from two sides.

Early in January, 1901, the agrarians gave the Government to understand that when the commercial treaties came to be revised they would expect a substantial increase of the duties on corn, live stock, and all agricultural produce, and later in that month Bülow formally gave the desired assurances on the point. When the bill was produced in July it proved to be almost as highly protective to industry as it was to agriculture. About two hundred classes of goods were allowed to remain free of duty; in a number of others – notably raw materials and partially manufactured articles – the existing duties were reduced, but in the great majority of cases there was an increase. The duties on corn, live stock, and meat were raised all round, and the agrarians

were relieved of duties on certain articles of importance for agriculture.

The new tariff obviously marked a clear departure from the policy pursued with so much success by Caprivi. It was the object of that policy to do equal justice to agriculture and industry, while making due allowance for the fact that Germany was becoming more and more an industrial country, and that the vital condition of that transition was cheap food for the working classes. Bülow professed that it was likewise his desire to show fair play to both of these great factors in the productive life of the nation – in his words, to "strike the balance between interests that are in many instances opposed to each other" – but with him agriculture had prior consideration. The proceeds of the old duties as a whole averaged in 1902 19 per cent. of the aggregate value of the imports taxed. It was estimated that the new duties would add a further 17 per cent. to the taxation of agricultural produce and 6 per cent. to that of industrial goods.

A long and bitter struggle over the tariff took place in committee, a struggle in which all sorts of antagonisms came to light – town against country, landowner against tenant, large cultivator against small, industry against industry, and capital of all kinds against labour. So long did the proceedings drag on, that no time remained for a full consideration of the tariff bill in the full House if it was to be passed before the end of the session. Hence came the irritating mimic *coup d'état* of December 13th, when, in accordance with prior agreement, a majority consisting of the Clerical, Conservative, and National Liberal parties passed the bill *en bloc* as revised by committee, directly the schedule of agricultural duties had been disposed of. The effect was to prevent discussion of any one of the seven hundred duties affecting industry and manufacture.

The new tariff was a triumph for the agrarians, and particularly the large corn-growers of the East of Prussia. They did not get all they wanted, but they got more than they expected, and on the whole they were well satisfied, for the corn duties, reduced in 1892, were now raised beyond the earlier level; those on wheat ranged from £2 15s. to £3 5s. a ton, those on rye and oats from £2 10s. to £3, those on barley from £2 10s. to £4, and the duty on flour was fixed at £9 7s. 6d. By way of concession to the working classes, whose staple food articles were again to become dearer, the Government agreed to add to the

new Tariff Law a clause (the “Trimborn clause"), proposed by the Clericals, providing that any increase in the revenue from the duties on corn, flour, and meat in excess of the average amount yielded during the years 1898 to 1903 (as calculated per head of the population) should be passed to a fund which should be used at some future time for the benefit of the survivors of persons coming under the Industrial Insurance Laws.

The man who reaped least credit for the tariff was its author which could not be said of Caprivi in 1892. Bülow’s case was a hard one. Clinging to the Ministerial superstition that in Germany in general, but in Prussia in particular, Junkerdom was the foundation of monarchy and the bulwark of law and order, and therefore that political interest required that the State should do for Junkerdom what it was prepared to do for no other section of the community, he had exerted himself, at no small sacrifice of popularity elsewhere, to satisfy the demands of the agrarian classes, yet he received only ingratitude and reproach that he had not done more. “It will be a long time,” he lamented, “before an Imperial Chancellor will do again for agriculture what I have done.”

In the later negotiations over the new commercial treaties Germany enforced the minimum rates for corn, while corn-exporting States, like Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Roumania, in return increased their duties on industrial articles. Most of the new treaties came into force in March, 1906, with duration until the end of 1917. Higher corn duties were not, however, the only concession required by the agricultural party in return for its support in the Diets of Prussia and the Empire. In the early years of Bülow’s Government a drastic law regulating the inspection of imported cattle and meat was also passed, the effect of which was to restrict greatly supplies from abroad. On the other hand, the Sugar Taxation and Sugar Convention Bills, under which export bounties were abolished, were carried in 1902 in the face of resolute agrarian opposition.

The revision of the customs tariff in the interest of agriculture had an important sequel in the Prussian Diet when several years later the Government brought forward a large scheme of canal construction. The first effect of the railways upon river and canal traffic in Germany had been injurious, and there was a disposition in the middle of the century to assume that the canal had become obsolete. For many years

there was little new canal building, the rivers were neglected, and it was only in the last quarter of the century, when it became recognized that the two systems of transport were complementary and not antagonistic, and that there was room and need for both, that active interest in inland navigation was revived. A new era in canal construction opened during the later years of William I's reign. The Dortmund-Ems Canal was begun in 1886 and completed in 1899, and with it the development of a large industrial district, with immense natural resources, received a new impetus. A year later a canal connecting the Elbe and the Trave was opened, bringing the North and Baltic Seas into communication before the Kiel Canal, opened in June, 1895, accomplished the same end on a bolder scale. In 1899 a bill was introduced in the Diet to empower the Government to construct a series of canals connecting the Rhine with the Elbe, a deep canal navigable for large vessels from Berlin to Stettin, with smaller connecting waterways, and extensive works of rectification on some of the shallower streams. Fearing that the extension of inland waterways, by cheapening the carriage of imported corn, would lower the price of this commodity to the industrial districts in the west and centre of the kingdom, and so to some extent neutralize the new tariff, the agrarians rejected the bill.

The project was one in which the Emperor-King was specially interested, and the rebellion of the great landowners drew from him a severe rebuke and led to the removal from office of certain Landrats who were among the ringleaders. It was 1905 before a compromise was reached and the bill was passed in a somewhat curtailed form, the waterway from Hanover to the Elbe being omitted, and the condition being introduced that before the canals were opened to traffic the Government should take steps to impose dues upon the navigable rivers of the monarchy, a transparent device for increasing the cost of waterborne imported grain. This proposal likewise roused bitter controversy, this time in the Imperial Diet, since it involved an amendment of the constitution, and when some years later (1911) opposition was withdrawn, it was subject to stipulations which defeated the hopes of the agrarians.

Most of the canal works authorized by the law of 1905 have since been completed, in some cases on a larger scale than was originally contemplated. While spending money thus lavishly upon canal

construction the Prussian Government usually leaves the working of the canals, together with the cost of their maintenance, to the provincial authorities. In the case of some of the later canals, however, the towing service has been monopolized by the State, and the same arrangement has been introduced by the Imperial Government on the Kiel Canal. This is not the only peculiarity of State canal enterprise as carried out in Germany in modern times. In the old days the landowners only allowed railways and canals to be built by sufferance and on the payment of heavy tribute. Now the tables have been turned. It is a feature of recent canal projects that the adjacent owners have been required to contribute towards the cost. In some cases the contributions have been paid partly in land and partly in money. In other cases the State has expropriated the adjacent proprietors altogether, with a view to securing to the community all future increase in land values. Thus the Canal Law of 1905 empowered the State to expropriate owners of land within one kilometre (five-eighths of a mile) of the Rhine-Weser Canal, such power to be exercised in favour of the provinces of Westphalia, Rhineland, and Hanover, and the State of Bremen, with a view to securing to them the increased value which might accrue to the land owing to the works carried out.

All the large German canals intersect the great northern plain; owing to the configuration of the land the artificial waterways of the south and centre of the country are of minor importance. On the other hand, the navigation of the rivers and their tributaries has been greatly improved in all parts of the country. Counting the cost of the Kiel Canal, the expenditure incurred by the States in canal construction and extension and the deepening and regulation of rivers during the reign of the present Emperor has been estimated at over forty million pounds, while schemes are still in course of execution or contemplated which will cost an equal sum.

While the States have as a rule undertaken the cost of river improvements, the riparian towns have emulated each other in the construction of harbour and docks, and to-day the Rhine from its entrance into Germany at the Swiss frontier is lined by an imposing succession of busy harbours, docks, and quays, upon the construction and equipment of which many millions of pounds have been expended during the past twenty years. On the seaboard ports like Hamburg,

Bremen, and Lübeck have renewed their ancient fame, and outdistanced their olden prosperity, while other ports, like Emden, have come to the front and given hostages to a prosperous future. In consequence of the constant endeavour to keep the canals and rivers in an efficient condition from one-fifth to one-fourth of the inland goods traffic of the country has for several decades been regularly carried by water.

There has been a large simultaneous increase in the mercantile marine. The total tonnage of German sea-going ships had been doubled during the twenty years 1850 to 1870 (from half a million to a million tons) and it doubled again during the following three decades. The same period also witnessed a large concentration of shipping in a few powerful companies of Hamburg and Bremen, which, having unlimited capital at command, came to dominate the German shipping trade. Another notable transformation has been the gradual transfer of shipping to the North Sea from the Baltic, some of whose ports as a consequence have lost much of their ancient commercial importance.

In 1909 a successful attempt was made to abolish the chaos in railway rates and tariffs which had increased since Bismarck's premature endeavour thirty years before to acquire the railways for the Empire. Something was also done at the same time to reorganize traffic management in the direction of uniformity and to overcome the particularist spirit which had hitherto led the railway-owning States to work their lines with a too exclusive regard for their own interests.

All these developments in transport and the mechanism of distribution generally reflected a corresponding expansion of industry and commerce. Germany had become one of the most important workshops of the world; her products invaded every market and her argosies were found on every sea. In few of the staple industries of the great commercial countries did she lag behind, while in some she overtook, and even outdistanced, far older competitors. Like England before her, yet without England's wealth of mineral resources, Germany has to a large extent built up her industrial prosperity and reputation upon coal and iron. Still following far behind her principal European rival in the production of coal, she surpassed the United Kingdom in the production of pig-iron in 1903, and with every succeeding year increased her advantage, though the United States

continued to maintain the lead which they obtained in the first year of the century. More significant than the mere volume of production, however, was the fact that the home consumption of this metal had increased by two-thirds during the twenty years 1890-1910, an increase due in large measure to the great demand for steel caused by the unexampled expansion of the engineering and shipbuilding industries. In the production of steel Germany had likewise outdistanced all competitors except one. Up to 1892 the United Kingdom still held the second place, though at a great distance behind the United States. In the following year Germany replaced her, and the position thus gained has been held and strengthened ever since.

In the first half of the nineteenth century Germany's most important contributions to civilization were in the domain of philosophy and letters. In the second half of the century her principal achievements were won in the realm of science and material values. To a profound belief in science and to its systematic and unremitting application in the service of industry, more than to any other causes, is due the prominent position which has been gained in the world markets by not a few of her great staple trades, and particularly the chemical and electrical trades, whose present stage of development is a standing testimony to the value and necessity for modern industry of intelligently directed research. A passionate devotion to material pursuits, not without danger for her intellectual life and the high national ideals of the past, led her to dispute the pre-eminence of the older industrial countries in the markets of the world. Here the system of protection introduced in 1879 undoubtedly proved for a long time of great indirect assistance. The home trade having been reserved to home production by high tariffs, it provided at once a foundation upon which to build prosperous industries and a base from which to conduct operations in foreign markets. For, enjoying a quasi-statutory guarantee of remunerative prices for the goods sold at home, her manufacturers were able to sell more cheaply abroad, and thus supplant their rivals in some branches of production in which exceptional technical skill and more efficient methods of distribution already placed them at a natural advantage.

These efforts to capture foreign trade were supplemented by other measures, such as the formation of syndicates and other industrial combinations, to be mentioned later, the co-operation of the large

banks, preferential railway rates for exported goods, and, not least, the encouragement given to German enterprise abroad by the Empire's diplomatic representatives.

Although the protective system had been carried to such excess that it pressed heavily upon the salaried classes and the poor, organized labour in general shared in the country's increasing prosperity, to which its higher standard of life in turn contributed. One important consequence of Germany's development on industrial lines was the almost entire cessation of emigration. Ten years after the Franco-German War the number of emigrants exceeded 200,000 a year, but a gradual decline during the succeeding twenty years brought the number to one-tenth of that figure. In later years, indeed, Germany has imported instead of exported labour, and for a long time the alien element in her industrial and agricultural army of workers – chiefly Russians, Poles, Italians, and Austrians – has been estimated at little short of a million.

When inaugurating the era of social legislation Bismarck predicted that it would survive his generation, and a series of laws passed in the early years of the century confirmed this prophecy. Following the amendment in 1899 of the Old Age and Invalidity Insurance Law, greatly to the benefit of the workers who came under it, the Accident Insurance legislation was applied to new groups of occupations in 1900, and in 1903 the Sickness Insurance Law was amended so as to afford longer (twenty-six instead of thirteen weeks) and more generous help to those cast aside by ill-health.

In 1903 also an important law was passed for the protection of children against exploitation by their parents and guardians. As a result of a Government investigation it had been found that more than half a million children of school age were in regular employment, 307,000 in industry (for the most part as outworkers), 172,000 as messengers, errand boys, and the like, 22,000 in public-houses, and 18,000 in shops. A large number of these little bread-winners were employed before and after school hours, and often employment lasted far into the night. Five years later an important law was passed restricting the hours of labour of young people and women engaged in factories and workshops. While children under thirteen years might not be so employed at all, a maximum work-day of six hours was fixed for those between thirteen and fourteen years and one of ten hours for

young persons between fourteen and sixteen years. In the case of women the maximum work-day was fixed at ten hours, with eight hours on Saturdays; their employment during night hours was prohibited; and the close time already prescribed for women at child-birth was prolonged to eight weeks. The effect of the various laws relating to child labour passed during these years was that children of school age were now entirely excluded from factories and workshops. Meanwhile, Merchants' Courts, analogous to the Industrial Courts, had been introduced in 1904 for the summary settlement of disputes arising between tradesmen and their employees.

Prussia in 1900 set an example in legislation to check the increasing prevalence of hooliganism by a law which empowered local authorities to remove from their homes young persons (under eighteen years) held to be in danger of demoralization and bring them under healthy influences in institutions or other suitable surroundings. The law was much criticized at the time as an excessive invasion of parental right, but on the *a posteriori* principle its need was held to be proved by a crime which occurred a little later, recalling tragic experiences in the lives of William I and his Chancellor. On March 6, 1901, on the occasion of a visit to Bremen, the Emperor was attacked by a young rough, who violently flung at him a piece of iron as he drove through the streets after an evening banquet in the town hall, inflicting a severe wound in the face. There was no suggestion of political malice – it was proved later that the youth was not responsible for his actions – but in replying to addresses of sympathy from the Presidents of the Imperial and Prussian Diets, the Emperor said that although the attack had left him "neither elegiac nor melancholy," he attributed it to "the confusion which reigns in the immature heads of our young people" and to the fact that "respect for the Crown, the Government and authority have in recent decades more and more diminished." He urged, therefore, that it was the duty of the schools to provide the remedy, and of the legislatures of the land to do their part by showing greater moderation in controversy and criticism. Addressing the Emperor Alexander Regiment at the opening of new barracks in Berlin later in the month (March 28th), he took a more serious view of the outlook and told the assembled troops that if ever again, as in 1848, the populace of that city broke bounds they would be relied on to "repel unruliness and misbehaviour

towards its royal master."

The incident encouraged the friends of denominational education in Prussia to make renewed efforts to place the elementary schools beyond reach of secularizing tendencies. The result was that in 1904 these schools were definitely given a confessional basis; only children of the same faith might be educated together, and instruction was to be given by teachers of their own creed, while management committees, upon which Protestants and Roman Catholics were to be represented, were to work side by side with the ordained education authorities.

In the same year there was formed under powerful influence an Imperial League for the Combating of Social Democracy. Financed liberally by the Conservative party and the large employers of the West, the League from the first carried on an unremitting struggle with the "internal enemy," but in the main its influence was confined to people, who were already convinced, and the only obvious effect of its efforts was to rouse the Socialists to greater exertions.

A long-standing grievance of the Imperial Diet was removed in 1906 by the Government's surrender on the subject of payment of members. Members of the Prussian Diet had since 1876 received an allowance of 15s. a day, which might not be refused, while members of the Diet of the Empire had never had more than free railway passes, available over all lines, and since 1884 only passes between their homes and Berlin. The proposal to grant money allowances had been debated and quarrelled over ever since the Empire was established, but Bismarck, apprehensive that an assembly of paid deputies would be dangerously democratic, had to the last resisted it. More than once since his retirement the Diet had affirmed the principle, but as the Federal Council still withheld assent, nothing had been done. Now, influenced chiefly by the increasing difficulty of forming a quorum, the Government came round to the Diet's view, and henceforth allowances became payable at the rate of £150 a year. Even now, however, the boon was not conceded unconditionally; members were required to earn their salaries by regular attendance, for a rota of attendance was to be kept, and there was to be a deduction of £1 for every sitting or important division missed.

Another open question was discreetly settled for a time in April, 1908, by an imperial law on the subject of association and public

meeting. The law fell far short of the demands of the labour party, but it greatly extended popular rights in regard to both matters, and by curtailing the power of the police it put an end to much petty persecution and chicanery. Upon the language question the Government would not give way; only German might be used in public meetings (other than those held during political elections) except in districts more than 60 per cent. of whose inhabitants spoke a different language, and even this concession was made only until 1928. The provision proved a new source of aggravation in the disaffected borderland districts, the Polish provinces of Prussia, North Schleswig, and Alsace-Lorraine.

The comparative advance made by social legislation during the early years of the new century was largely due to the impetus given by Count von Posadowsky, the Imperial Secretary of State for the Interior (emulating the example already set by Baron von Berlepsch), who faithfully acted up to his promise: “So long as I hold office I shall be a Minister for and not against social reform.” He retired in June, 1907, to the cordial regret of the Socialists as of the orthodox parties, and was succeeded by the Prussian Minister for the Interior, Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, a friend both of the Emperor, with whom he had studied at Bonn, and of the Chancellor. Bülow boasted that he never allowed himself to be irritated, but followed the maxim of that hard old soldier Wrangel, who used to say: “I seldom worry – I prefer to worry others.” Nevertheless, man of peace though he was, he was not destined to have a tranquil Ministerial career. He had quieted the Conservative agrarians for a time by agreeing to their demands. He had also to pacify the Clericals. For in the Diet elected in 1903 it was the attitude of these two parties, and particularly the Centre, which in the main determined the fate of the Government. The Ministerial Conservative groups controlled less than a hundred votes, and even with the opportunist National Liberals thrown in they formed little more than a third of the House, and the parties in permanent opposition, the Radicals, Social Democrats (now a stately phalanx of eighty-one), and the nationalist groups, outnumbered them. It followed that the Clericals, numbering a hundred without the Poles, held the casting vote, and for the Government it was unfortunate that they were able at will to use this vote in one of two ways, either in alliance with the Ministerialists, which was the normal course, or, if

their interests lay in that direction, in conjunction with the Social Democrats and the Radicals. Encouraged by a knowledge of its power, the party, true to its principle of doing nothing for nothing, succeeded in obtaining amongst other concessions the reversal of one of the most obnoxious laws passed during the *Kulturkampf*. In March, 1904, the restrictions upon the movements of the Jesuit order and congregations, which had been introduced in 1872, were greatly modified. The order itself and kindred organizations continued to be excluded from the Empire, but their members might no longer be required, or refused permission, to live in special districts as hitherto. Later, Bavaria introduced further ameliorations on her own account.

In the winter session of 1904-5 the Government was further thrown upon the support of the Centre for the success of a new Army Bill, which was intended to fix the peace strength, again for five years, at 506,000, exclusive of officers and one-year re cruits. Germany was suffering at the time from a fit of nervousness, for Great Britain and France had concluded a series of agreements closing open questions in various parts of the world, and in this pacific measure apprehensive minds persisted in seeing a veiled threat. Without the Roman Catholic vote a coalition able to carry the bill was impossible, and Count von Bülow had no choice but to accept it and with it the obligations that were to come after. Now the Clericals began to use their power without restraint or scruple. By pressure here and interference there, by open suggestion and covert threat, the Government was left in no doubt that without the support of the Centre its life was not worth a day's purchase.

In one direction the influence of the Clericals would have been entirely beneficial had it not exceeded due limits. This was in relation to colonial policy. The colonial movement of 1884-5 aroused at the time no enthusiasm in that quarter of the Diet. When, however, Cardinal Lavigerie took up the question of the slave trade and the Government in 1888 began to give him cordial support, the Clericals abandoned their passive attitude and henceforth made the welfare of the natives their special concern, with beneficial results, of which the full fruits were to be enjoyed only in later years. During and since Caprivi's Chancellorship the colonial movement had perceptibly slackened. The reason for this lay only in a secondary degree in the cooler attitude of the Government. The ardour of the colonial

propagandists, indeed, continued unabated, but the nation at large had been discouraged by a series of gross administrative failures and by the growing cost of its imperialistic adventures. For a long time the colonies were governed by a special department of the Foreign Office, to which later a council of experts was added, and for local administration a colonial civil service had to be created. No doubt the central Executive did its best in the choice of men, but in many cases the choice was unfortunate, and the results were disastrous. The colonies had been acquired suddenly and without deliberation, and it soon became clear that the country had embarked upon a momentous enterprise with no clear ideas as to what colonization meant, how it was to be carried out, or the exertions, sacrifices, and responsibilities which it would entail. Now it learned that the acquisition of territories was merely a preparatory step, and that the real task came later. If the task was not faced in the right spirit, it was perhaps less from ill intent than from ignorance and inexperience.

Bismarck's first idea of colonial empire, as we have seen, was a purely commercial idea; the object of colonies was to be trade, and not territorial expansion for its own sake. Accordingly he gave prominence to the merchant and planter, and sought to keep the official in the background, confining the function of the Government, as far as possible, to guaranteeing protection to the whites in the exercise of their acquired rights. That plan did not long succeed, if it can be said to have succeeded at all. The traders, left to themselves, made free and often unscrupulous use of their opportunities of advantage; and the growth of native discontent compelled the Government against its will to assume administrative responsibilities of a far larger kind than it had originally contemplated. Now it went to the other extreme, and stringent bureaucratic control was installed in place of the crude *régime* of the "Hanseatics." The natives liked the new system as little as they had liked the old, and disaffection and disorder continued. In 1891 and 1892 repeated risings occurred in East Africa; they were suppressed without menace to German authority, but not without heavy expenditure of life and treasure. When this colony had been pacified, the Cameroons took up the tale, and the disorder which occurred there continued without intermission for some years. Every outbreak of the kind helped to shatter the early dream of colonial enterprise as an affair of cheaply won prestige and

glory, and thus it was that much of the nation's earlier enthusiasm for empire gave place to apathy.

Endemic insurrection in the colonies continued, and in Bü- low's time disaffection reached a climax. During the three years 1904 to 1906 no fewer than seventeen separate expeditions and campaigns, of greater or smaller extent, were necessary in the Cameroons alone. German East Africa was also in constant rebellion. Worst of all, however, was the rising of the Hereros in South-west Africa which occurred in 1903, a movement which took the form of a determined attempt to eject the German intruders root and branch. Unsympathetic administration and excesses by the German traders were the principal causes of this lamentable episode. The German judge located at Windhoek, the centre of administration in the colony, admitted that the rebellion there was due to outrages by Ger man traders, who, pretending to be Government officials, seized the natives' land and cattle in the discharge of debts already paid, and it was significant that while the Hereros attacked the Germans wherever found – women and children alone being spared – no Englishmen or Boers were harmed.

More than any other party except the Social Democrats the Clericals showed an earnest desire to probe the causes of the recurrent disorders and insurrections in the African colonies. They were unsparing in their exposure of the wrongs done by the white traders and settlers, and unwearied in their championship of the natives. The zeal with which at this time they endeavoured to create a cleaner and more efficient colonial administration had also material results of no small importance, for they were able to unearth certain objectionable colonial contracts for transport and supplies the cancelling of which saved the Empire large sums of money. Had they stopped at disclosure and criticism, all would have been well. They began, however, to obtrude their influence in administration in illicit ways, claiming special favours for the Roman Catholic missions, setting up black lists of officials displeasing to them and pressing for the acceptance of nominees of their own. This interference reached such limits that it became at last a question whether the Government or the Centre was in charge of colonial affairs.

A crisis came in December, 1906, when, after having succeeded in defeating a bill for the reorganization of the Colonial Office, they

refused the Government's demand for a vote of a million and a half pounds required for the military operations against the Hereros. They offered, indeed, to vote a million pounds, but even so only on the condition that the German troops in the colony should be at once reduced, a demand which virtually challenged the Emperor's hitherto undisputed right to fix the number of troops needed for warlike purposes. Upon a two-fold issue of such importance no compromise was possible, and the question went in due course to a division. Then the Social Democrats joined hands with the Clericals, with the result that the Government was defeated by 177 votes against 168. The Diet was promptly dissolved, and with its dissolution the Conservative-Clerical coalition came to an end.

The immediate need was to secure such a favourable grouping of parties as would relieve the political situation and bring the war in South-west Africa to a speedy and successful close. Bülow determined, however, to fight the elections upon a larger issue. A situation had arisen which he had long and anxiously foreseen. For nearly seventeen years, ever since the defeat of the Cartel in the elections of February, 1890, the Clericals had virtually given to the Government its marching orders, yet while working with the Conservatives there had been a constant fear that they would one day cast off those associates and, in the pursuit of some special interest of their own, make common cause with any party or group of parties strong enough to create with them an anti-Ministerial majority. For a long time the Government had deferred this danger by following a course of sheer bribery, buying their support for one measure and buying off their opposition to another, regardless of the fact that with every capitulation the Clericals became more conscious of their power and increased their terms accordingly.

Confident that his cause was popular and the hour favourable, Bülow, now Prince von Bülow, appealed to the nation to vote against the Centre. He was not forgetful of the valuable assistance which the party had given to the Government during recent years in connection with the Customs Tariff, the Navy Bills, and social policy, nor was he wishful to see it reduced to a position of insignificance and sterility, even were that possible. He wanted' a majority which, without necessarily excluding the Clericals altogether, would yet be independent of them; they were to be at liberty to help the

Government, if so disposed, but on the Government's terms and no longer on their own. The best arrangement would have been a return to the old Cartel of Conservatives and National Liberals, but from such a coalition there could now be no hope of victory. Rather than risk defeat by forcing the Radicals to regard themselves as a disparaged and unneeded party, he decided to work for a combination which would bring into the Ministerial fold all parties which pursued national aims. In a well-considered electioneering manifesto Bülow placed before the country the grave issues upon which it had to decide, appealed for the subordination for once of party to national interests, and called upon Conservatives, National Liberals, and Radicals to join forces for a vigorous campaign against Clericalism and Social Democracy. The Conservatives were willing but not eager converts to this new idea of public duty. The Radicals, on the other hand, were flattered by the compliment paid to them in being recognized in so handsome a way as constituting one of the pillars of the State, and for the first and last time in their history they sank political differences without splitting and cooperated with their ancient enemies. Thus was formed the memorable parliamentary *bloc,* a Wallenstein's Camp of ill- assorted combatants, which lasted but little longer than the crisis which called it into existence.

The composition of the new Diet fulfilled the Chancellor's expectations. The Clerical party returned in somewhat greater strength, but the Social Democrats lost nearly one-half of their eighty-one seats to the Conservative and Liberal groups in almost equal proportions. A *bloc* majority was the result, and it put the Government out of immediate danger. The South- west African war vote was promptly granted, and the military operations in the disturbed colony were continued with redoubled energy. Nevertheless, the struggle was still a severe one, and when tranquillity was at last restored the Hereros had been reduced by the sword and exile from a tribe of 200,000 to a remnant of 50,000, while their stock was extinguished and their land appropriated. The war cost Germany two thousand men in killed and wounded and an expenditure of over twenty- two million pounds, a sum largely increased by the cost of subsequent works of reparation. After 1907 the Clericals did not again refuse Army, Navy, or Colonial Bills.

The colonial controversies of that time had later results of great

importance for Germany's foreign empire in general. As colonial questions had precipitated the elections, the return of a Ministerial majority was held to indicate the nation's desire for a forward policy. Dr. Bernhard Dernburg, then a bank director, had in 1906 been called to the head of the colonial department of the Foreign Office, and to his duties he brought the aptitudes and instinct for practical affairs of a successful business man. He saw at once that the first condition of successful colonization must be the study of administrative methods in the best school. With that idea in mind he visited British colonies in Africa, after first being given a free run of the Colonial Office in London, and fortified by the observations and experiences which he gained in this way, he was able to revolutionize the too bureaucratic methods of his own officials and to correct many of their narrow conceptions of colonial policy. In particular he took to heart one fundamental difference between English and German methods of colonial administration, viz. that while in the treatment of native populations and the organization of their life England had followed the wise guidance of experience and instinct, the growth of centuries, German action had been determined far too much by mechanical principles, borrowed from the Prussian bureaucratic system.

His first task, however, was to rehabilitate the colonial movement at home, to rescue it from the disrepute into which it had fallen, and to re-create, if possible, a strong colonial sentiment. To this end he undertook an evangelizing tour through Germany, and, aided by Princes, Ministers, and other men of authority in the States visited, he succeeded in renewing something like the old ardour and faith which twenty years before had sent the colonial movement on its way so propitiously. Receiving in this way a sort of national mandate, he was able to go to the Diet with confidence and, convincing it that the colonies were still a sound business proposition, ask for liberal grants for the purpose of works of development which had long been neglected. Amongst these railways took the first place.

The administration of the colonies was at this time detached from the Foreign Office and entrusted to a more or less independent Colonial Office, with separate departments for administration, finance, military questions, and the civil service, and Dr. Dernburg became the first Colonial Secretary. The old Colonial Council was abolished and its place taken by agricultural and economic sections, composed of

permanent officials, one of whose principal functions was the study of the resources and needs of the colonies from the standpoint of agriculture and commerce. Further, the colonial service was reconstituted, the finances of the colonies were reorganized, new principles were applied to the dealings of the local administrations with the native populations, military and police services were established, and the legal and judicial arrangements in the colonies were reformed. Henceforth local administration in the colonies was made less bureaucratic. Already there had been attached to some of the colonial governments (1903) councils composed, on the principle of the legislative councils of British Crown colonies, of officials and citizens, and this system was extended. In several colonies also administration was to some extent decentralized by the introduction of local self-government in so far as it was practicable in regions in which the whites still formed an insignificant part of the population, and were seldom concentrated in large numbers. Here the German system of local government was applied with necessary modifications, the commune being treated as the unit of local government.

Many blunders which had been committed by colonial governors were rectified. In their eagerness and haste to see the colonies opened up and their resources developed some of the governors had granted railway, mining, land, and trading concessions and monopolies both to German and foreign adventurers far too freely and sometimes for an altogether inadequate consideration. Some of these privileges were good neither for the colonies nor the mother country, and where possible they were cancelled or bought back.

Above all, the interests and rights of the natives were for the first time frankly recognized, and the arbitrary and often cruel conduct of the white settlers, which in some colonies had long been a crying scandal, was sternly repressed. Dr. Dernburg had found on visiting East Africa that in his treatment of the natives the German trader systematically used the lash. He reported to the scandalized Diet that no German trader went about the streets of Dar-es-Salaam without a whip, and that he even found one on the table of the chief tax office in the town. Brutality of the kind, in East Africa and other colonies, was rigorously prohibited and known offenders were brought to book. Colonial governors had been dismissed and punished before for misconduct, conspicuously the notorious Dr. Karl Peters, who was

found guilty in 1897 of murdering a native who had dared to compete with him in profligacy, as well as of other revolting cruelties, and was deprived of office and pension. In 1907 two other governors, Horn and von Puttkamer, were degraded and cashiered, the first for torturing to death a native who had been guilty of peculation. Improved measures were adopted for combating epidemics and ameliorating insanitary conditions generally; hospitals were established more freely, a proper medical service was instituted, and the work of the Red Cross Association was transported to the colonies. Schools and agricultural training for the natives were also provided. From that time may be dated a new era in colonial development. In the tropical colonies of Africa the German and other white planters have since greatly increased the area under rubber, tea, coffee, cocoa, cotton, fruits, and other produce in constant demand in European markets, while the native populations have been trained to industry by the establishment of experimental farms and schools. Nevertheless, valuable as the colonies have since proved for commercial purposes, as sources of tropical produce and raw materials needed for industry, and as markets for home merchandize, they have offered no solution of the emigration question. This qualification applies still more to the latest colonial acquisition, the large slice of the Congo rubber region ceded by France to Germany under the Morocco agreement of 1911, and added to the Cameroons, which was thus carried to the boundaries of the Congo State. The one colony which is suitable for settlement by whites is South-west Africa, and here, in spite of the discovery of mineral wealth, only agriculture on a large scale would appear to be possible. One of the later governors, Herr von Lindequist, has estimated that the colony will not support more than 10,- 000 ranchers, the labour being done by blacks.

The protectorate for which most has been done is Kiauchau, which is a naval station and an outpost of the Empire rather than a colony, and has been developed from that standpoint. Considering that the place is nominally held only on lease, Germany has sunk an enormous amount of money in Kiauchau. The port itself has been converted into a first-class barbour; a railway has been built 250 miles into the interior of China, with lines to Tientsin and other large centres of population; schools, a university, and hospitals have been established for the benefit of the native population, but chiefly as centres of

German influence; industries have been established, roads built, and European methods of agriculture and forestry introduced. By these and other measures the way had been prepared for a bold policy of pacific penetration in China proper when war broke out in Europe in the summer of 1914 and the protectorate passed into other hands. Dr. Dernburg did not remain in office long enough to see the full fruition of his work, for in June, 1910, he resigned, rather than continue to resist a conspiracy of the Conservatives, who, tolerating middle-class men in Ministerial office only when they were prepared to disown, as Miquel did, their middle-class sympathies and interests, had resented his appointment from the first and had worked unceasingly for his downfall. Nevertheless, he will always be held in honour as the man who for the first time put the colonies and their administration on a sound basis and sought to mete even-handed justice to the native races.

Bülow's Chancellorship lasted nearly ten years, and the second half of the period was for the Empire a time of growing anxiety both at home and abroad. To the foreign affairs of the period detailed reference will be made in the following chapters, and it is only necessary to record at this point several facts of outstanding importance. There now took definite shape a new combination of Great Powers which, though it seemed to Germany a direct menace to her individually, was yet a natural result of and a counterpoise to the system of alliances by which she herself had divided the Continent for a generation. Simultaneously, French influence in North Africa was consolidated by the pursuance in Morocco of a policy of political penetration, a policy which was destined to bring the rivals of 1870 once more into pronounced antagonism, yet in circumstances which placed Germany at a great disadvantage. Meanwhile, Russia and Austria had become seriously alienated over the Balkan question. Above all, the political situation was strongly coloured by an increasing tension between Germany and Great Britain, with the gradual growth on both sides of a premonition, fatalistic in the oppressive sense of imminence which it created, that a dangerous crisis in the relations of the two nations was approaching.

At home a deep-seated spirit of unrest and discontent had laid hold of large sections of the people. There had been amazing strides in national prosperity and in the accumulation of wealth, yet taxation

had become every year heavier under the pressure of the ever-increasing armaments – first the army and of late years, in rapid acceleration, the navy as well – and now, to aggravate the evil, a time of rising prices set in. Food riots occurred again in 1907 in some of the large towns, just as on the eve of the Caprivi commercial treaty departure, but the agrarian party, then taken unawares, was now so powerful that any attack upon its positions, even had the Government dared to make it, would have had little chance of success. The people suffered, therefore, and complained all the more.

The Socialist movement also had grown to still more threatening dimensions. Although in the elections of January, 1907, the parliamentary party lost ground, little comfort could be derived from the fact, except by those who wished to be deceived, seeing that a quarter of a million electors more than before voted the red ticket and that with proportional representation the party, instead of having 43 seats, would have had 120, or nearly one-third of the House. The remarkable growth of Socialism as a force in imperial politics further increased the dissatisfaction of the working classes with the electoral arrangements which denied to them a corresponding influence in the Diet of Prussia. The electoral areas and their numerical representation remained as originally fixed both in the Empire and the monarchy, in spite of the great changes in the distribution of population; but while in the imperial elections, owing to a democratic franchise, the Socialists were able to assert predominance in many of the large towns and industrial districts, in the Prussian elections the antiquated three-class system of voting virtually excluded them from the Lower House, which remained, as before, essentially a house of landowners and farmers, State officials, rich industrialists, and professional men.

Some moderate concession to popular aspirations might at this juncture have conciliated the Socialists, while at the same time pleasing the Radicals, but the Government would not hear of it. For Bülow was at heart a reactionary, and from the moment that he became Minister the restraints which Hohenlohe had tried to impose upon the feudalist party were removed. He was entirely out of sympathy with Liberal movements of all kinds, and in parliamentary life his one determination was to resist any tendency to shift the centre of political gravity from Right to Left. Hence he opposed every attempt to enlarge the nation's constitutional powers, or to alter the

basis of election in the direction of a more democratic representation. All his sympathies predisposed him to the aristocratic system of government, and he never disguised his low opinion of the middle classes. The German nation, he was wont to say, was intellectually and temperamentally unfit for self-government, and needed the control and guidance of a strong centralized Executive – the argument by which German reactionaries have at all times defended the existing system of pseudo-constitutionalism. Occasionally he threw to the popular parties a patronizing phrase or a philosophical platitude, which seemed to suggest broad-mindedness and appreciation of progressive political thought, but his acts belied all such pretences; this smiling courtier, who never quarrelled and never worried, shared to the full all Bismarck's hostility to democratic aspirations, though he was less open in his manner of showing it.

No factor in political life contributed more powerfully to produce unrest and disharmony than the renewal in a still more emphatic form of that system of "personal government" which had begun to excite alarm in Caprivi's time, had already seriously undermined the constitutional position of the Ministers, and had been largely responsible for the retirement of all the first three Chancellors. During the Bülow regime this reassertion by the Crown of powers and functions which belonged to the pre-constitutional era reached a climax. From the moment that Bismarck went the power which had been concentrated in his hands became dissipated: the domination of one great personality had given place to the rivalries of many small ones, yet all the combined capacities and activities of the men who bad divided amongst them the Empire-builder's mantle did not compensate for the absence of a single mind conscious of a definite and resolute purpose and of the will to accomplish it. Prince Hobenlohe had seen from the first how matters were bound to tend. Visiting Berlin in the early months of Caprivi's Chancellorship, he formed these dominant impressions:

"Two things have struck me in these last three days: one, that no one has any time, and that every one is in a greater hurry than before; and secondly, that individualities have expanded. Every individual is conscious of himself, while before, under the predominating influence of Prince Bismarck, individualities shrank and were kept down. Now they are swollen like sponges in water. That has its advantages, but

also its dangers. The single-minded will is lacking." No words could better describe the effect of Bismarck's disappearance. It was his good luck that he had been able to have a constitution made to his liking and virtually to his order. The office of Imperial Chancellor was created for him, and he was careful to protect it against any such division or limitation as was theoretically possible in the Prussian Cabinet. This he did by making the Chancellor the sole Minister of State, so that all his necessary colleagues became subordinates and, at his will, supernumeraries. His constitutional power, considerable as it was, he had increased by the usurpation of functions which were not his at all, but the Crown's, and gradually he made his position autocratic by allowing no interference either by the Secretaries of State or the Emperor himself. He had, indeed, on one occasion induced the Sovereign to issue a declaration bidding the nation know that all acts of his Government were acts of his imperial person, but the vital question was, Who was in effect the Government? and the Government was Bismarck.

It was impossible that the large powers which the first Chancellor had exercised could be handed down to his successors, seeing that the new Emperor had been determined from the first. to rule in deed as well as word. Bismarck once said: "A good Minister should not trouble about his Sovereign's favour, but speak his mind freely," and he sacrificed himself to his own philosophy. Had he not tried to follow with the third Emperor the policy which had succeeded with the first, he might have remained in office to the end of his days. He ventured to press his independence too far, however, and he had to go. In later life he reflected not without bitterness: "Former rulers looked to their advisers for capacity more than obedience. If obedience alone is to be the criterion, then demands will be made on the general genius of the monarch which even Frederick the Great would not have satisfied, though politics, both in war and peace, were less difficult in his time than in our own." The later Chancellors successively took office with a full consciousness that in proportion as they endeavoured to follow the path commended by their own judgment they risked the disfavour either of the Emperor or his Conservative bodyguard or both.

Bismarck was right when he said that William II intended to be his own Chancellor. Caprivi was quick to recognize this, and chafed as he saw his office gradually belittled and his responsibilities reduced to a

show. Under Hohenlohe the usurpation by the Sovereign of his Chief Minister's functions made further progress. At that time the Bismarck party hankered more than ever for a "resolute Minister." But for resolute Ministers there was now no place or need, and such men would only have been in the way. More and more the Emperor had taken the reins of government into his own hands, with the result that the Chancellor had fallen into the background. Since there was no longer a powerful central personality, around which the whole machinery of government revolved, the minor men, thirsting for distinction, began to take liberties, each in his own sphere, and that, too, meant the disparagement of the Chancellor's office.

The same tendency continued in the early years of Bülow's successor in office, between whom and Admiral von Tirpitz. there was waged a continual struggle, the Chancellor holding to the constitutional doctrine that he alone was the responsible Minister, and the head of the Admiralty endeavouring to magnify his office and thereby to increase naval expenditure in every possible way. Bismarck was Chancellor for twenty years. During the ten years following his resignation three men held that office, while Imperial Secretaries of State and Prussian Ministers came and went with the seasons, welcomed always with smiles, often dismissed in disregard as soon as they were weary of the puppet play in which they were called to take part, or ceased to act their parts satisfactorily.

So it was that there grew up in the room of the old Bismarckian autocracy a far more mischievous personal *régime* of the Emperor, expressing itself in forms and measures which were contrary both to the spirit and the letter of the constitution. All initiative was taken from the Government; everywhere the Sovereign stood forth as the real director of public policy, even identifying himself openly with official acts and attitudes regarding which the nation was hopelessly divided, and resenting opposition to any policy approved by him as opposition offered to his own person. The result was to increase the hostility of the Government's opponents, and more and more to moderate or alienate altogether the sympathy of those who had been amongst its truest friends. The more the Emperor declared that all was right, the more the nation disbelieved him. Now nothing was taken on faith, and the old German disposition to criticize and cavil belittled successes and magnified failures. The eager quest for unity which had

fired the national imagination for two generations had been gratified, but, having gained unity, the nation no longer seemed to have delight in it. People coined weird phrases like "empire-weariness" and "empire dejection" to express the political lassitude which had fallen upon them. It was in vain that the Emperor begged his people (as at Breslau in September, 1906) to "look with clear gaze upon the future," and declared that he "would not tolerate pessimists." He was told that his own policy more than anything else had obscured the outlook, and that if all the pessimists were to be disowned he would have few subjects left.

It was not only in Prussia that this depression prevailed. In the secondary States a painful impression was caused by acts and words of the Emperor which seemed to show that he entirely misunderstood his position amongst the federal Princes, and forgot that the German Emperor was not the Emperor of Germany. His repeated declarations, made with no pretence of equivocation, that he alone was lord and master in Germany, that there was only one will in public affairs, his own, and that his policy alone should be carried out, were warmly resented in the South, and gave fresh life to the old particularism which Bismarck, whose official dealings with Prussia's federal allies, whatever his secret sentiments regarding them may have been, had generally been marked by the greatest tact, had succeeded in appeasing. The Bavarian Crown Prince found it necessary to protest publicly (May, 1900): "I do not see why, because we belong to the German Empire, we should not have just the same rights and privileges as North Germany. Above all, I protest against the idea that it is a favour to belong to the Empire, for the Empire has been welded together quite as much by Bavarian blood as by the blood of any other German tribe, and for that reason we will not be regarded as inferiors but as equals."

The smaller States were no less concerned about their position and rights. When a dispute over the regency of Lippe, an internal matter affecting that State and no other, had been settled to the satisfaction of the people of the principality, the Emperor, whose brother-in-law had failed in his claim to the succession, telegraphed that he would neither acknowledge the new ruler nor allow the troops to take the oath to him. With a dignity worthy of the occasion the Government of Lippe answered that no outside interference could be allowed in the

affairs of the little country. Other interferences of the kind were the result rather of thoughtlessness than aggressive intentions. Thus when in 1903 the Lower House of the Bavarian Diet, for reasons of its own, rejected a vote for the purposes of art, the Emperor telegraphed to the Prince Regent his "deepest indignation at its contemptible attitude," and offered the money out of his own purse. The Bavarian people protested against the slight both in Parliament and the Press.

Bülow, like the good courtier that he was, defended the sending of the telegram on the ground that it was not a State but a personal act, and laid down the doctrine, which later was to prove embarrassing to him, that "the idea that all the monarch's expressions of opinion should be endorsed with the signature of the Chancellor is wholly foreign to the constitution." His argument rested on the plea that inasmuch as the Emperor had not acted in his capacity as head of the State, his action could not be wrong, but the plea ignored the really pertinent fact that quite as binding upon Sovereigns as the written letter of the constitution is the unwritten law of discretion.

It would have been well for Bülow if he had worried, if only a little, over the Empire's increasing difficulties. With great talent he had little courage, however, and for the sake of a quiet life he would have compromised many a theory dear to even the soberest of constitutionalists. It was chiefly due to his easy toleration of the Emperor's impetuous interventions in public affairs that there grew up a system of co-government under which the Sovereign and the Chancellor worked at cross-purposes; for while the chief Minister of the Empire carried on politics officially in one way, the Emperor by his compromising utterances, in the form of speech, letter, and conversation, did the same thing on his own account.

Undoubtedly political parties were to blame for much of the impotence and futility of parliamentary life both at that time and later. Most of them had ceased to represent clear, decided principles, and some had become identified with the advocacy of class interests in the crassest form. If the Conservatives saw in politics merely a means of benefiting agriculture at the expense of the rest of the community, the National Liberals in a less effective way had become the special advocates of the great industrialists. Both the Clericals and the Social Democrats were no doubt inspired by a genuine solicitude for the less fortunate members of society, but while the former viewed

all political questions from the standpoint of the Church, the latter viewed them solely from the standpoint of labour, and neither saw them truly and as a whole. Least excusable of all were the Radicals, who had ceased to follow a consistent course and had more and more become opportunists and time-servers. This want of clarity and principle in political life meant loss of vigour, influence, and authority. Never were the custodians of public life themselves so greatly in need of vigilant watching.

Moreover, the old days of rigid party discipline were past; in the higher councils of every fraction there was a host of men every one just too small to lead and just too large to be a willing follower. Even the Clerical party lacked the cohesion of Windthorst's time. When that consummate leader died no legitimate successor existed, and the consequence was that rival pretenders strove for his mantle and in so doing tore it into fragments. A unanimous vote was invariably certain on capital issues; but there was much loose manœuvring by ambitious sharpshooters, whose unofficial escapades did no credit to the party or its cause. In the ranks of Social Democracy also the spirit of discord, premonitory to many outside observers of disintegration, seemed to have set in, for a "revisionist" wing had begun to challenge the authority of the old leaders, and to throw doubt upon some of the party's most cherished doctrines.

The publication in 1906 of the diaries which Prince Hohenlohe had diligently kept throughout his official life added to the prevailing discomfort. The memoirs drew aside the veil which had partially obscured many critical incidents of the reign, including some of quite recent years, and afforded to contemporaries the material for judging sundry heated controversies which is usually reserved until the interest in the actors has evaporated or the controversies themselves have become ancient history. Many of the opinions and conclusions which the nation had formed regarding the Emperor, his strong will and intolerance of opposition, his determination to go his own way, and his readiness to part with three of his Chancellors, received unexpected confirmation from his own utterances and those of near friends, here prematurely made known. The disclosure of confidences of so intimate a character was unusual, and the generally accepted opinion, that it was prompted by the desire of the late Chancellor's relatives to avenge his grievances, as well as to justify his public life,

was probably not far from the truth.

In the same year the public mind was further disquieted by certain disagreeable revelations made by a popular censor of the private life of public men, the journalist Maximilian Harden, showing that near to the Emperor's person and enjoying his confidence were men of evil disposition – notably the exambassador Prince Philip zu Eulenburg – whose proper place was in gaol. The fact that the Emperor, against whose private life slander never raised its voice, was unacquainted with the character of these associates was held to be a tribute rather to his personal virtue than to his discretion. It was his eldest son, the Crown Prince, better versed in the ways of the world, who had warned his father of the questionable company he was keeping.

The climax of this accumulation of untoward occurrences came in 1908, when two embarrassing incidents led to a storm of public censure before which not only the Chancellor but the Emperor himself was compelled to bow. Early in the year (March 6th) the London *Times* published the fact that in the preceding month the First Lord of the Admiralty had received from the Emperor a letter (February 17th) suggesting the reduction of the British shipbuilding programme and stating reasons why the excitement caused in England by German naval expansion was unjustifiable. It has been shown that Germany's naval preparations had created great uneasiness in England. A new Navy Bill of 1908 finally exhausted English patience, and a cry was now raised for a navy so large that Germany, when she had done her utmost, would still be left hopelessly behind. It was in the hope of allaying apprehension and moderating the agitation for shipbuilding on this large scale that the letter to Lord Tweedmouth was written. Perhaps more was made of the letter than the circumstances justified. Its contents were admitted to have been harmless and its spirit was friendly. As a letter from Sovereign to Sovereign it would have been free from objection; what was, of course, irregular was the apparent attempt to influence English policy through a Minister of State, though against this criticism it could be urged that the letter was intended to be a perfectly private communication. Had the Emperor spoken his mind in conversation, no one would have taken his frankness amiss: his indiscretion lay in the fact that he had put his thoughts into writing.

Both in the British House of Commons and the Imperial Diet the

unfortunate communication gave rise to interpellation and debate, in each case without loss of temper. Prince Bülow, speaking of the letter as one which "any sincere friend of good relations between Germany and England" might have written, still harped unconvincingly upon the difference between the Emperor's private and public acts, declaring that "the letter of the Sovereign does not, from the fact that it deals with political questions, become thereby an act of State." The distinction was perfectly true and just, though confusing to ordinary people, who cared nothing about fine points of constitutional law and were concerned only with the indisputable fact that owing to lack of reticence the Emperor had again compromised himself and his country. To them the letter was merely another illustration of the dangers of the "personal *régime*."

No sooner had the controversy aroused by the navy letter died down than another and a more serious newspaper disclosure, again in England, brought the Emperor once more into violent conflict with his people. On October 28th the London *Daily Telegraph* published a report of an alleged interview with the Emperor on current political questions, and vouching for its unimpeachable authority the journal commended it as a message of good-will from that Sovereign to the British people.

As such the report was unquestionably intended, whatever its actual effect may have been. While the authenticity of the statements contained in the reputed interview has never been disputed, it became known later that the report was not the record of a single continuous duologue, but rather a mosaic of isolated *Logia*, made at sundry times and in divers manners, so skilfully put together as to give the impression of a single unpremeditated utterance.

Briefly the Emperor was represented to have said that he was cordially friendly to England, contrary to England's belief; that for years he had kept German policy free from Anglophobist tendencies and had incurred the distrust and hostility of his own people in so doing; that during the Boer War he was England's only friend in Germany, and that it was he who wrecked the Boer delegates' hopes of European intervention; and that he likewise prevented France and Russia from rushing in when they wished both to save the Boer Republics and humiliate England to the dust. There were also vague suggestions of a plan of campaign which he had caused to be drawn

up by his generals and had despatched to Queen Victoria in "black December," when everything seemed to be going wrong in the war and all the world feared for the future of the British Empire except the Empire itself. Intermingled with these professions of friendship for England were references to France, Russia, and Japan which were not likely to please those countries.

The publication of the interview created consternation in Germany, while the rest of the world wondered. Interpellations rained upon the Government, and now it was found that the manner of the Emperor's pronouncement was hardly less remarkable than the contents. It appeared that the report had first been submitted to the Emperor and then sent by him to the Chancellor for approval, but that, without reading it, Bülow had passed it on to the Foreign Office, which in turn had returned it to the Emperor for publication without remark. Probably never before did an important State document run the ordeal of official scrutiny and reach the outside world more easily. Aghast at his own lack of prudence, and recognizing his responsibility for the consequences, Bülow at once honourably tendered his resignation, but without any desire to press it, for his duty was obviously to endeavour to undo the mischief which he had helped to create. There was no more talk of the subtle distinction between the Emperor's public and private utterances and acts. Whether the awkward interview was or was not an act of State, Bülow was at last shaken out of his complacent theory that the Sovereign had as much right as any private individual to hold his own opinions and to utter them. Now the Diet and the nation looked to him for resolute action, and for once he did not fail them.

The question was debated by the Federal Council, which agreed with the Chancellor that this greatest of the Emperor's indiscretions must be the last, and that he must be required to pledge his word to that effect. Addressing the Diet on November 10th – a day described by a lachrymose Ministerial journal as "a day of mourning for the German nation" – Bülow said: "The opinion that the publication of these utterances has created in Germany profound excitement and painful regret will – this conviction I have firmly formed in these sorrowful days – cause his Majesty the Emperor in future to impose on himself, even in his private conversations, the reserve which is indispensable to unity of policy and the authority of the Crown. Were

it otherwise neither I nor my successor would bear the responsibility of office."

The manliest thing – perhaps the only manly one – ever done by Bülow was when on November 17, 1908, he went to Potsdam to read the Emperor probably the first serious lesson he had ever heard upon the position and duties of a constitutional Sovereign. Yet the task was not, in truth, a difficult one, for the Chancellor carried the mandate and spoke with the united voice of the federal Princes, the Government, the Diet, and the nation. The Emperor, though protesting that his action had been misunderstood and its importance exaggerated, gave the undertaking required of him, and the same evening the *Official Gazette* reported the audience and its result as follows:

"The Emperor received the representations and explanations of the Imperial Chancellor in a highly serious spirit, and announced his will as follows: 'Undeterred by the exaggerations of public criticism, which he regards as unjust, he regards it as his highest imperial duty to safeguard the stability of the policy of the Empire, with due regard for his constitutional responsibilities. He accordingly approved of the statement made by the Imperial Chancellor in the Diet and assured Prince Bülow of his continued confidence.'"

Thus fortified, the Chancellor had now to pacify the Diet, which was waiting impatiently the result of the Potsdam conversation. Never before had that body been so unanimous and so unsparing in its criticism of the Crown as in the vehement debates which occurred over this incident, when the first Minister of the Empire led the attack and staunch Conservatives, loyal to the marrow, vied with uncompromising democrats in their denunciation of the "personal *régime*" as the fount and origin of Germany's humiliation in the eyes of the world. In spite of Bülow's complete surrender to his critics, the Diet refused on this occasion to be satisfied with apologies: it wanted a victim, and as this could not be the Emperor it vented its ire upon the Chancellor by passing a vote of censure upon him by an emphatic majority, yet was none the less greatly relieved when it knew next day that the censured Minister did not intend to resign.

It might have seemed at that time that a decisive crisis had occurred in the relations between Crown and Parliament and that the future of the constitutional cause was bright with promise. Eloquent

deputies talked confidently of the coming new order of responsible Ministers, and indulged in visions of parliamentary government on the English model. But in Germany, where reaction is never far from progress, the only safe rule in political life is that the past always repeats itself, and of this rule the nation before long received a rude reminder. For visiting Königsberg in August, 1910, the Emperor recalled the time when in that city his grandfather placed the Prussian Crown on his head with his own hand in sign that "it was conferred upon him by God's grace alone and not by Parliaments, national assemblies, and popular resolutions," adding the moral, "Regarding myself likewise as an instrument of the Lord, I go my way, which is devoted only and solely to the welfare and peaceable development of our fatherland, indifferent to the views and opinions of the day." The words may not have been intended as a direct answer to the Diet's action of two years before, yet they were no less a significant evidence, which could not be explained away, of the political mediævalism which divided the Emperor from the majority of his people and alienated Germany herself from the modern world.

Bülow remained in office in 1908, but he did so as a matter of duty, and when the opportunity of laying down his responsibilities returned he seized it. He had not long to wait, for in the following year another adverse vote, due to a different combination of parties, convinced him that further delay was inadvisable. Once again the Conservative landowners wanted a new Chancellor, since from this one no more was to be expected. A taxation bill was made the pretext for a quarrel. More money was wanted – more money was always wanted – for the army and navy and the colonies, and the difficulty of raising it increased every year, as expenditure multiplied and the possible sources of revenue were one by one exhausted. The service of the imperial debt alone represented a serious and growing liability which could only be evaded, as it was for a time evaded, by paying interest out of new loans. The practice of borrowing began only midway in Bismarck's Chancellorship, and when he resigned the total debt of the Empire fell below fifty million pounds. During the ensuing ten years it had more than doubled, and most of the additional indebtedness had been caused by expenditure which should have been covered by current taxation, chiefly expenditure on the army and shipbuilding, and by deficits otherwise unprovided for, In

consequence financial reform was a theme which seldom disappeared for long from the proceedings of the Diet, and the sessions were rare in which no changes in taxation were made or at least proposed.

Bismarck's last reform gave to the Empire four million pounds more revenue from brandy, and this increase, together with the normal growth of revenue from other sources, made it independent of the matricular contributions for several years, and even enabled it to distribute to the States, under the terms of the Franckenstein provision, already explained, a considerable sum from the proceeds of the customs and excise duties earmarked for that purpose in 1879. The next important reform of taxation was that of 1900, which became necessary owing to the passing of the second Navy Law. On that occasion some of the existing excise and stamp duties were increased and new stamp duties were imposed on bills of lading. Hitherto wine had been exempt from excise duty, but now a duty on champagne was introduced.

The revision of the customs tariff which took place in December, 1902, as has been said, was not undertaken primarily with the object of raising more revenue, but as this effect was bound to follow, the Government accepted the "Trimborn clause" of the new law, already mentioned (see p. 319). Then the calls upon the States became again so regular that in 1904 the matricular contributions were made permanent by a law which repealed the condition which had hitherto limited their continuance, viz. "so long as imperial taxes are not introduced." This law also abolished the Franckenstein proviso; yet while as a consequence the Empire henceforth retained the entire proceeds of the customs duties and the tobacco excise duty, it was still required to pay over to the States "assignments" (*Überweisungen*) consisting of the net proceeds of the brandy duties, as well as of certain stamp duties. Henceforth all surpluses were to go normally towards meeting extraordinary expenditure, in the hope of diminishing the need for borrowing.

In 1906 the larger expenditure on armaments and the accumulating deficits made necessary further additions to taxation. Baron von Stengel, the Secretary to the Treasury, needed at that time twelve and a half million pounds of additional revenue in order to put the Empire's finances in a healthy condition and to meet the imminent needs of the defensive services. A direct increase of the tobacco duty

was refused, but revenue was obtained from tobacco by a duty on cigarettes. The beer duty was increased by the introduction of the South German principle of progressive taxation. At that time Bavarians, with their higher taxation and larger consumption of beer, were being taxed on this commodity to the extent of 5s. 3d. a head, while North Germans paid only 8d. a head. New duties were also imposed on railway tickets, motor-cars, and company directors' fees. Most important of all, a series of imperial probate (legacy) duties were introduced for the first time. These duties already existed and yielded a large revenue in some of the States. All existing duties were now abolished; but the States were to receive one-third of the proceeds of the imperial duties, and they were also to be empowered to levy for their own purposes a further percentage of these duties and to apply the duties to lineal relatives, who were exempted by the imperial law. The reform was carried in the teeth of strenuous resistance from the landowning classes, whose loyalty to the Government was strained to the utmost. Another attempt was made by the Liberal friends of direct taxation to gain acceptance for their old proposal of an imperial income tax; but this, like proposals for the taxation of capital, failed owing to the opposition of the State Governments, which protested against any further invasion of their staple sources of revenue.

As so much was required from the States at that time, an important concession was made to them in return in the proviso that when the matricular contributions exceeded the assignments by more than 40 pfennige (5d.) per head of the population the excess should not be levied until July of the third following budget year, the hope being entertained that by that time it might not be necessary at all. The result was that by 1909 the unpaid contributions exceeded fourteen million pounds.

By a further reform of that year the Empire took over this liability, but was empowered for the future to levy matricular contributions to the amount of 80 instead of 40 pfennige a head of the population. This increase of the matricular contributions was part of a larger scheme of taxation reform. Not only had the taxes introduced in 1906 proved disappointing, but expenditure had further increased. There had been a general increase of Civil Service salaries, due to the higher cost of living; larger subsidies were needed under the social insurance laws; there had been the costly military expeditions to the colonies; and

above all the insatiable demands of the army and navy continued. It was estimated that the revenue in 1908 only exceeded by ten million pounds that of 1904, while the expenditure was twenty-two millions more; and the imperial debt had further increased, and now stood at two hundred million pounds. As no new large source of taxation appeared to be available, it was necessary to develop the existing ones and to fall back upon a series of petty fancy taxes, which yielded little except annoyance. Beer, brandy, and tobacco, which were still lightly taxed, might easily have supplied all the revenue needed, had not the vested interests been so powerful. The taxation of these articles was, indeed, increased, but only moderately, and for the rest an unearned increment tax was introduced, with duties on electric light and gas mantles, matches, dividend coupons, cheques, and acetic acid. Taxes on unearned increment had been introduced already by a large number of towns in all parts of the country, and had proved very remunerative. Now the Government appropriated this form of taxation, and, making it universal and placing it on a new basis, retained one-half of the proceeds for imperial purposes and assigned 40 per cent. to the communes or communal unions and 10 per cent. to the States to cover the costs of collection.

The Government also favoured the introduction of death duties, and the proposals made on the subject would have saved the situation. Against such an attempt to restrict further the immunities of real estate, however, the Conservative landowners at once raised violent protest, and, the Clericals joining them, in resentment at Bülow's attitude in the last elections, the proposal was rejected by the narrow majority of eight votes on June 24th.

Early in the year Bülow had given the Conservative leader to understand that if his party refused to vote the succession duties and he were compelled in consequence to choose between dependence upon a majority which was unacceptable to him and resignation he would resign. A compromise was patched up, to ease the difficulties of the moment, for money had to be found somehow, and then Bülow retired (July 14, 1909), glad to lay down an office of which he was weary and in which he had done the hardest work of his life. Perhaps already he had a premonition that there were in store for the ship of State heavy seas that would baffle the seamanship of a fair-weather steersman. Considering the difficulties with which he had to deal, his

long term of office was a remarkable tribute to his astuteness and *savoir vivre*. A political wit, parodying one of Bismarck's memorable dicta, once said that " Bülow fears the Junkers, and nothing else in the world." That he was able to keep the Junkers at bay so long was due to the fact that he was the only Chancellor who really succeeded in winning the Emperor's complete approval. Of the four Chancellors who had now served William II he was the only one who quitted office with flying colours, bearing with him the regrets as well as the gratitude of a ruler who was not easy to please. His resignation was a "resignation with brilliants"; the Order of the Black Eagle, the highest distinction of the kind in the gift of the Sovereign, was the memento which fell to him at parting.

It cannot be said that his retirement excited great regret or created any serious gap in political life, for parliamentary parties took Bülow no more seriously than he took them. Easy-going, *débonnaire*, accommodating, he was but little suited to the strenuous ways of modern statecraft. No fighter, he preferred always to gain little by gentle ways than much by violent, and while success gave him no elation, failure never depressed him. As a dialectician he excelled, and German parliamentary life has known no more consummate master of rhetorical artifice. He had appropriated to excellent purpose Mephistopheles' injunction, "Mind, above all, you keep to words!" He kept to words always, and they never failed him, even in the most difficult situations. Most political orators who, like Socrates, wait for the inner light to tell them what they shall say blurt out at the critical moment only follies and inepitudes. Bülow's ready wit shone equally in extemporized or prepared speech; always he had at command the happy phrase that soothed and satisfied all but the most exacting of his hearers, whether they understood him or not. In truth he was only understood when he wished to be, for no man had greater skill in darkening counsel. Subtlety and sophistry are as brother and sister; the same blood runs in both. Bülow's keen intellect disposed him to resort in his parliamentary oratory to mystifications of language which at times bordered on flippancy. Even when, as often happened, he trod safer ground by retailing Bismarck's phrases or clothing that statesman's shrewd maxims in his own language, his reputation for elegant shallowness compromised his influence; never did he succeed in giving the impression of weight, force, or compelling conviction. No

modern statesman took public life less tragically, and it is probable that on the whole none derived from politics more entertainment than he.

The pressure of the agrarian party upon legislation, which reached a climax in its obstinate resistance to all proposals to tax real estate, led in this year to the organization of the commercial and trading classes in the Hansa League, a body claiming a non-political basis, yet in fact representing views on commercial and fiscal questions directly opposed to those of the "German Conservative" and kindred parties. Within two years branches of the League covered the whole country and its members numbered 300,000. While not setting up parliamentary candidates of its own, the aims of the League have since been embraced by a considerable group of deputies in both the Imperial and Prussian Diets, nearly all of them members of the National Liberal and Radical parties, which have consistently represented the interests of industry and commerce.

An economic development of greater importance, and in its way the counterpart of the agrarian movement, was the organization of industry in the form of cartels and syndicates which was in progress at this time. Encouraged by the protective tariff introduced in 1879, though of earlier origin, this movement made rapid strides during the 'eighties, and in course of time powerful combinations were formed in all the important industries, more particularly those engaged in the production of raw materials or the earlier processes of manufacture. The largest organizations of the kind were established in the coal, iron, and steel industries, though other industries passed so completely under the control of the syndicates that they almost came to have a monopolist character. While the syndicates undoubtedly represented a higher form of industrial organization, the immediate effect, and usually the purpose, of their formation was to curtail competition and to increase prices. The syndicate movement is, however, only one phase of a general tendency towards the concentration of industry and capital in large undertakings. During the past two decades this tendency has been specially marked in relation to the colliery, iron and steel, engineering, chemical, shipbuilding, and shipping industries. In all of these branches of enterprise the small capitalist has more and more been supplanted by gigantic combinations, usually capitalized on a joint-stock basis, and

not infrequently controlled by or working in close association with powerful banks.

The revelation of much abuse of their power by the syndicates led the Imperial Government to institute an inquiry into the extent, management, and influence of these organizations. Several volumes of evidence were published as a consequence from 1903 forward, but no restrictive legislation was proposed, nor has any been foreshadowed since. On the other hand, something was done in Prussia to check the tendency of the syndicated colliery companies to abandon the less remunerative pits, a practice resulting in a serious displacement of population, by the passing of the Mining Law of 1905, which made such action dependent, in certain circumstances, upon Government assent. Later the Prussian Government itself, in the hope of exerting a moderating influence upon prices, joined the powerful Westphalian coal syndicate in virtue of the State collieries in the Westphalian and Saar coalfields, but its membership did not long continue. More important from the standpoint of labour policy was the action of the same Government in 1910 in taking control of the potash mining industry, in which it had large proprietary interests, and converting the potash syndicate, which had existed since 1884, into a statutory organization. The law which effected this change introduced a principle new in the relationships between a monopolist corporation and its workpeople, for it provided that whenever the wages of labour fell below the average of the years 1908 and 1909 (later the standard years were altered to 1912 and 1913) the share of output falling to the mine concerned should be curtailed.

One of Bülow's last acts as Prussian Minister-President was to apply to the Polish districts a still severer measure of coercion. Easy-going and easily convinced, Bülow had at once accepted the inevitableness of resolute methods. His attitude was expressed in the words: "In a struggle between nationalities a nation is either hammer or anvil, either conqueror or conquered." As, however, the Land Commission had hitherto failed to use the hammer with effect, and the Poles still stubbornly refused to accept the position of anvil, another measure for the forcible Germanization of the Eastern Marches was resorted to. This was the law of 1909 empowering the Government to expropriate landowners whose estates were held to be suitable for settlement by Germans. Formally the law made no

distinction between German and Pole, but its purpose was obvious. The country at large regarded the proposal as one of desperation and as a frank confession of failure. Bülow, however, described expropriation as "the logical consequence of the policy of settlement," and because it was logical it was adopted, yet only after a bitter struggle, in which the usual party distinctions were strangely confused. For some time the Conservative landowners resisted the proposal as strongly as the Radicals, fearing that by assenting to it they would forge a weapon which might one day be used against themselves, but in the end it was their votes which saved the bill. In the Lower House there was a minority of 119, Clericals and Radicals against the bill, while in the Upper House the minority was 143. The measure was sped on its way by a further grant of several million pounds for land purchase and by a vigorous German propagandism organized by the Eastern Marches Association.

The Expropriation Law has not as yet been used with the freedom which was expected, since the Land Commission has since been able to obtain by voluntary arrangement as much land as it has been able to deal with, especially as a further vote of eleven and a half million pounds was granted for the purpose in 1913; yet it remains in reserve, an *ultima ratio* of force to which, when applied, there can be no reply. Short of the actual expatriation of the Poles, the Government has now reached the utmost limit of coercion. What, however, have been the results of this coercive scheme of colonization, of which a German historian has spoken as "perhaps the worst mistake of Prusso-German policy in recent decades?" The answer to this question is that although great results have certainly been achieved they have not been the results aimed at or desired. As to the political aspects of the question, it cannot be doubted that the effect upon the Poles of prolonged coercion has been to strengthen their national spirit and their aspiration for racial unity. As if that were not failure enough, it has been found that the effect of driving the Poles from the land has been their concentration in the towns of the East and West, where they have become an easy prey to Socialist agitation and have joined the army of the discontented.

The economic results of the struggle have been more obvious and also more unexpected. Far from injuring the Polish rural population or diminishing its influence, the policy of Germanization has conferred

upon it great benefits and renewed its prosperity. It is true that since 1886 over a million acres of land have been acquired by the Land Commission on behalf of the State and parcelled out into holdings at a cost of roughly thirty-five million pounds, and that 21,000 German families, representing in the aggregate, with dependents and labourers, about 200,000 individuals, have been settled in the Polish districts. But of the land so acquired little more than one-fourth was previously in Polish hands, and of this minority a third was bought during the first three years. Moreover, by the Government's competition as a buyer the value of land has greatly increased to the advantage of the Poles even more than of the Germans, for they have been enabled to sell, where willing, at their own prices.

The Poles have shared equally in the prosperity which has come to the eastern provinces generally owing to the Government's action. Hundreds of thriving communes have been created; poverty has been banished from whole districts which formerly were hopelessly stagnant; modern methods of agriculture have been introduced; by the improvement of roads and railways and the use of co-operative methods the farmers everywhere have been enabled to dispose of their produce more advantageously; and while the owners and cultivators have chiefly benefited, the labourers also have found steadier employment under better conditions and at higher wages. All these benefits have been shared by the Poles equally with the German inhabitants, so that in many ways measures which were intended to be merely repressive have proved ameliorative in the highest degree, and so far as the Poles are concerned have produced results just the reverse of those desired. Even in the towns the Polish traders and handicraftsmen have thriven as never before in consequence of the larger purchasing power of the agricultural districts. Where there has been an increase in the German relatively to the Polish population, it has chiefly been caused by the migration of Poles to the wealthier industrial districts of the West, and only in a minor degree can it be claimed as a result of the settlement policy. Nor can it be said that the creation in the West of a race problem which did not exist before is any compensation for the small degree of relief which may have been gained in the East. In a word, the policy of repression, pursued so long, persistently, and rigorously, has merely proved, in Goethe's words, "a part of that great power that ever does the good while

seeking ill."

Towards the end of Bülow's Chancellorship a tardy act of conciliation eased the long-standing difficulty of the optants' children in North Schleswig, in number about twelve thousand. The optants themselves were Danish subjects; but, since under the Danish law nationalization is conferred only by birth in Denmark, their children were aliens. At the same time they were not Prussians, since in Prussia nationality follows the rights of the father. The consequence was that these children had no fatherland and no national status. Their equivocal position was now regularized by their admission to Prussian citizenship as an act of special grace. The question might have been settled by legal regulation as a domestic matter; by the wish of Denmark it formed the subject of a treaty between the two States (January 11, 1907) which incidentally made it clear beyond further doubt that Denmark no longer claimed the *plébiscite* of the North Schleswig population on the annexation question which was provided for by the Treaty of Prague and never granted. For Prussia the agreement was in so far advantageous that it removed a cause of grievance and irritation, and brought a large number of future citizens under the civil and military laws of Prussia and the Empire. Bülow's successor was Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, in whom a typical Prussian bureaucrat of the best type rose to the highest office in the State. Bethmann-Hollweg at the time held the portfolio of Home Affairs both in Prussia and the Empire, and in this capacity he had won a high reputation as a plodding worker of great industry, rather solid than original, and safe than brilliant. It was his misfortune to have inherited a heavy load of domestic difficulties which his predecessor, without exactly creating, had aggravated by his constitutional unwillingness to face disagreeable facts, and in foreign affairs to have fallen into evil traditions which it was too late to disown yet none the less dangerous to perpetuate.

As little provocative as Bülow himself, he was far more concerned to remove the causes of mischief by timely action, and he accordingly first devoted himself to the task of conciliation at home. He increased his reputation at the outset of his career as Chancellor by the promptitude with which he succeeded in preventing threatened friction with the Vatican. Although the *Kulturkampf* ended with the complete capitulation of the secular power, the religious bitterness

which it had excited had never subsided; smouldering embers of passion were left which provocation on either side easily fanned into flame. Protestant sentiment was outraged in 1910 by the publication of the Borromeo encyclical *Editio sæpe* of May 26th, directed against free-thought. In this letter Pope Pius X spoke of the Reformation as "a vicious corruption and a perversion of discipline," and referred in unflattering terms to the association of some of the German Princes with the movement. Prussian Protestantism in particular felt acutely aggrieved, and a vehement outcry arose against the foreign Pontiff who had thus dared to revile the memory of Dr. Martin Luther and the faith of his followers. Yielding to the clamour, the Prussian Government sent a tactful remonstrance to Rome, whereupon the Pope disowned any intention of hurting the feelings either of the Protestant Princes or their subjects, and a council of cardinals resolved that the encyclical should not be circulated in Germany.

About the same time a still more serious misunderstanding with Rome threatened to reopen the very issues over which the *Kulturkampf* had been fought. A papal encyclical of September 8, 1907, *De pascendi dominici gregis*, directed against the heresies of the Modernist School, as represented by Loisy and Tyrrell, had required the priests and teachers of the Church to take the oath against this innovation, so disruptive of Catholic dogma and tradition. The prospect of a second invasion by the Papacy of the State's province in public education created alarm in Germany, and there was premature talk of abolishing the Roman Catholic faculties at the universities. Controversy raged violently for a long time, and peace was only restored when the Pope gave an undertaking, which was notified in a letter to the German prelacy on February 1, 1910, that the taking of the oath would be restricted to priest professors and would not be required of professors engaged in purely lay functions. Nevertheless, the Prussian Government let it be known that if teachers of the higher schools were asked to take the oath against their convictions they would be protected against the consequences of refusal. An attempt made a little later by certain over-zealous Clericals to discredit the Christian trade union movement of the Rhineland and prevent any future co-operation between Roman Catholic and Protestant workmen in labour organizations was suppressed owing to the timely intervention of several princes of the Church, acting on instructions from Rome.

One of Bethmann-Hollweg's earliest acts as Prussian Minister-President was a feeble attempt to abate a long-standing political grievance of the working classes, who were almost deprived of representation in the State Diet owing to the inequitable franchise on which the Lower House was elected. There had of late been electoral reform in Saxony, Baden, and Bavaria, and even Mecklenburg had responded to the call of progress; but in Prussia, in spite of repeated efforts to move the Government, the system of election and the distribution of seats continued just as when the Diet was created over half a century before. In 1908 these efforts had been resumed, and the friends of labour were able to point to the flagrant fact that in the elections of that year the two Conservative parties secured 212 seats with 16 per cent. of the primary electors, while the Socialists with 23 per cent. of the electors secured only seven seats. The speech from the throne with which the Diet was opened in October promised a reform of the electoral law in the form of "an organic development, in accordance with economic evolution, the spread of knowledge and political intelligence, and the growth of the sense of responsibility to the State." Not satisfied with these impressive phrases, however, and calling to mind the declaration of Prince Bülow some months before, that when the time came for broadening the franchise plural voting, based on age, property, or educational qualifications, would be introduced as a check, the Socialists rashly concluded that popular demonstrations might accelerate progress. Accordingly, early in 1909 they organized in Berlin and other large towns street processions, followed by mass meetings at which inflammatory speeches were made. Whatever the Government might have been willing to do had it been left alone, the pressure of the populace was regarded as an attempt to intimidate the Crown, and Bülow refused to yield to it. When in July he resigned nothing had been done.

In the following February the new Minister-President produced the long-deferred Electoral Reform Bill, and to the disappointment of all friends of honest parliamentary representation it left the principal inequalities untouched. No attempt was made to adjust representation to the existing distribution of population; all the constituencies, whether under-represented or over-represented, were to continue as before; voting was still to be open; and even the three-class system of grouping the electors was to remain. The only changes proposed were

the abolition of indirect or mediate voting – i.e. the electors were no longer to exercise their suffrage through middlemen – the reclassification of the electors with a view to less numerical disparity in the three groups, and the addition of an educational to the existing income qualification in the case of the first group with a view to its enlargement. Nevertheless, moderate as it was, the Conservatives and Clericals refused the bill as a dangerous surrender to democratic tendencies. The fight was therefore between these two groups on the one hand and the National Liberals, Radicals, and Social Democrats on the other, and as the reactionaries were in a large majority, they were able to alter the bill to their mind. After they had restored the indirect method of election the measure was no longer worth passing, and at the end of May it was withdrawn. Since then no further attempt has been made to modernize Prussia's political arrangements. The Government's last word on the subject was the warning to the Prussian Lower House on January 13, 1914, that it would never accept an electoral law of the Diet's framing. Before this a minor concession to the humaner spirit of the time was made by the Imperial Government when a law was passed (1909) abolishing the disqualification for the exercise of the franchise in elections to the Imperial Diet which had hitherto been entailed by the receipt of public assistance of several kinds, e.g. care in sickness, institutional care in case of tuberculosis, casual relief given in emergencies and refunded, etc. It was left to the States to adopt this principle at will. An attempt was made to this effect by the Radical party in the Prussian Lower House, but the Government opposed it.

Bethmann-Hollweg was more successful with the reform of the constitution of Alsace-Lorraine, for there he had to deal with the Imperial Diet, with its strong leaven of Liberal sentiment. The autonomist party of Alsace had never ceased to agitate for a constitution which would give to the Imperial Province the status of a federal State; and in this endeavour it had gained powerful allies in the immigrants who, to the number of some hundreds of thousands, had come from other parts of the Empire, and particularly the Southern States, bringing with them traditions of independent sovereignties and more or less free government. However greatly they might differ upon other questions, the autonomist programme offered to the old French and new German populations a platform upon which

they could work together. So strengthened, the demand for self-government came to be regarded in Berlin as one to be welcomed rather than any longer feared. Bethmann-Hollweg confessed, indeed, a little later that he had already come to the conclusion that "we shall not go forward in Alsace-Lorraine until we abandon the fruitless attempt to make out of the South German Imperial Province a North German Prussia."

The only question now to be decided was, how far self-government should go. The dictatorship paragraph had been abandoned in 1902; but that was merely a concession to sentiment, for the powers which were conferred upon the Stadholder by this paragraph existed only in name and had no practical importance. By the constitution given to Alsace-Lorraine in 1911 the Province became for most practical purposes an autonomous federal State, though without political independence. The constitution substantially reproduced in a modified form the political arrangements of Prussia or any of the other German monarchies, the principal difference being that the Emperor, in the name of the Empire, took the place of an independent Sovereign. The chief executive power continued to reside, as before, in the Emperor, acting through a Stadholder, appointed by him; the powers hitherto exercised by the Federal Council were abolished; and the Province was given a Diet consisting of two Chambers, whose independent assent, followed by that of the Emperor, is necessary to all legislation. Just as by the imperial constitution all ordinances and decrees of the Emperor require to be countersigned by the Imperial Chancellor, so by the constitution of Alsace-Lorraine these acts of government need the counter-signature of the Stadholder, who in the same way is held to accept responsibility for them to the Diet. The Stadholder may thus be regarded as in some sort the Chancellor of the Imperial Province. On the other hand, all decrees issued by the Stadholder require to be countersigned by the Secretary of State.

The Upper House of the Diet consists as to one half (twenty-three) of its members of nominees of the Emperor – being citizens of the Empire and inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine – proposed by the Federal Council; and as to the other half of (*a*) five *ex-officio* members, viz. the Roman Catholic bishops of Strassburg and Metz, the President of the Chief Consistory, and the President of the Synodal Executive of the Augsburg and Reformed Protestant Churches respectively, and the

President of the Supreme Court of the Province; and (*b*) eighteen elected representatives of various corporations, viz. four for the large towns, Strassburg, Metz, Colmar, and Mülhausen, chosen by their Municipal Councils, one for Strassburg University, one for the Jewish Consistories, four for the Chambers of Commerce of the above towns, six for the Council of Agriculture of the Province, and one for the Chamber of Handicrafts. The Lower House consists of sixty deputies, elected for single-member districts on a democratic franchise modelled on that of the Imperial Diet. Members were to be paid at the rate of 20s. for each day's presence at Strassburg on legislative work, together with travelling expenses. Three representatives were assigned to the Province in the Federal Council; they were to be appointed by the Stadholder, and inasmuch as he was the nominee of the Emperor-King, it was assumed that he would choose only persons whose sympathy with Prussia could be relied on. For that reason it was stipulated that the votes of the Alsace-Lorraine delegates might not be counted when they would give to Prussia a majority or when the questions under consideration related to alterations of the imperial constitution.

During both the Committee stage of the bill and its later readings in the full Diet a determined attempt had been made by the popular parties to give to the constitution a truly Liberal character, in the hope of satisfying the desire of the Imperial Province for complete self-government. Amendments were accordingly adopted by large majorities, the effect of which would have been to deprive the Federal Council and the Diet of the power to interfere further in its internal administration, and to transfer from the Emperor to the Federal Council the appointment of the Stadholder, the former having henceforth only an empty right of confirmation. To all these amendments, however, the Government offered uncompromising resistance.

The constitution as enacted marked, indeed, a great advance in the political independence of the Imperial Province, yet because it came short of the expectations of a democratic population it was received without enthusiasm. There was still, in fact, to be government from Berlin, though in another form, for the Emperor-King continued to be the sole repository of executive power; and not only was he entitled to nominate one half of the members of the Upper Chamber, but his right

to an equal voice with the Diet in legislation – a right denied him by the imperial constitution – gave him in effect a veto upon the decisions of that body.

Nor did the constitution bring peace. The first elections to the Lower House of the Diet were sufficiently premonitory, for they resulted in the return of twenty-six Clericals, ten members of the Lorraine bloc, twelve Liberal-Democrats, and eleven Social-Democrats. Limited though its powers were, the Lower House from the first showed a determination to assert them to the full, and conflicts between the two Chambers soon became common. Matters were not improved when in May, 1912, following one of these exhibitions of independence, the Emperor, then a visitor to Strassburg, threatened that unless the Diet proved more tractable he might have to repeal the constitution and even incorporate the Province in Prussia. The Emperor's powerlessness to do either of these things rather increased than diminished the significance of the threat, as an indication of the spirit of ascendancy which in the North still fought for mastery with the spirit of conciliation.

In November, 1913, the cause of pacification was again thrown back owing to the tactless folly of a young officer attached to the garrison of the little Alsatian town of Zabern (Saverne). Street demonstrations against the mischief-maker and the soldiery under his command followed, resulting in an outburst of military ferocity which outraged the whole nation. Martial law was illegally proclaimed over the heads of the civil authorities; a large number of citizens were imprisoned in a cellar; machine guns were set up for use in the streets; indiscriminate bayonet charges were made upon crowds whose worst crime was that they jeered at the offending officers, and in these charges many innocent and defenceless people were injured. It was in vain that Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg attempted to assuage the passions of the Diet and promised amends for every fault that had been committed by the military authorities. A vote of no confidence in the Chancellor was passed on December 4th by 293 votes to 54, the latter given by Conservatives, who alone defended the officers and soldiery. The vote had no effect upon the course of events, but it was welcomed by the nation as an expression of its own indignation. The Zabern garrison was removed in deference to public opinion, but an uneasy feeling was created later by the Emperor's action in decorating

the officer in command. A year later it was possible for a German statesman to say that "the Germans living in Alsace-Lorraine are in an enemy's country."

The Zabern incident was the more disturbing since it followed immediately after a series of unpleasant law-court disclosures relating to the methods adopted by the great Essen armament firm of Krupp in obtaining orders for munitions. It was shown that the firm maintained agents in Government departments, that they practised the systematic bribery of Government officials, and that naval and military officers and civil servants had vied in divulging official secrets to them. As a result of the proceedings the principal defendants were sentenced to terms of imprisonment. The episode led later to an inquiry by a committee of the Diet, but its usefulness was diminished owing to the fact that the Government refused to appoint as a member the Socialist deputy Dr. Liebknecht, who had unearthed the scandal. The consequence was that the Socialist party, the largest and most independent in the House, declined to take part in the proceedings.

Several useful measures of social reform were enacted about this time. One such measure passed in 1911 gave tardy recognition to the grievances of the home workers. These workers, who formed and still form one of the largest, hardest-worked, and worst-paid groups of manual labourers in Germany, had hitherto been ignored by labour legislation. Now the Industrial Code was amended so as to secure for them healthier conditions of employment, reasonable hours of labour, and some guarantee of better remuneration. A more important social law was the monumental Imperial Insurance Code of the same year, consolidating all the workmen's insurance laws of the preceding thirty years, extending and amending their provisions, and introducing State-aided provision for the dependents of insured persons by a system of survivors' pensions. Simultaneously an independent law was passed for the insurance of clerks and *employés* against sickness and old age, with provision here also for their survivors. A law of 1913 introduced an important change in the legal status of persons of German birth domiciled abroad. Under the old Nationality Law (June 1, 1870) German citizenship was forfeited by any German who lived for ten years continuously in another country. A law of July 22, 1913, superseding the principle of *jus loci* (right of domicile) by that of *jus sanguinis* (right of blood), abolished the absolute forfeiture of national

rights, and allowed Germans henceforth to be nationalized abroad without loss of their old nationality. In the same year the law of relief settlement was made uniform for the whole Empire. When the law of the North German Confederation was taken over by the Empire in 1871 Bavaria was allowed to retain her special legislation, which was intimately bound up with her Poor Law and local burgess rights. There had been an amendment of the law in 1908, when in Alsace-Lorraine the French law of public assistance was assimilated to the German system, i.e. relief by the communes of settlement, and domicile was henceforth acquired throughout Germany by persons of sixteen years after one year's residence. Now Bavaria surrendered her particularist customs, and the law of relief settlement, and with it the provision for poor relief, became uniform for the entire Empire. Memories of Bismarck's State monopoly projects were revived by a novel legislative measure proposed in 1912. Although these projects were originally received with distrust and vehement opposition, insomuch that their author was never tempted to reopen the question, public opinion in Germany had undergone a great change since the syndicate movement began, the conviction growing that if the nation had to choose between monopolies in the form of the *régie* and monopolies created and manipulated by private corporations, its interests would be safer in the hands of the State. This was shown by the favourable reception given to an imperial law by which the Government, with a view to defeating the attempts of a powerful foreign trust to dominate the German market, proposed to create a State monopoly in the import and sale of petroleum, without engaging directly in the retail trade. The scheme was ultimately withdrawn owing to technical difficulties.

The greatest of social problems continued as before, however, to be the steady progress of Social Democracy. The setback which was supposed to have been suffered by the movement in 1907 soon proved to be more apparent than real. Political grievances, increasing taxation, and the serious rise in the cost of food which, beginning in 1905, continued steadily for some years, furnished the Socialists with powerful arguments against the Government, and there were repeated outbreaks of popular discontent in various parts of the country. The climax was reached in the autumn of 1910, when a dearth of meat, accompanied by exorbitant prices, aroused protests so widespread and threatening that the Governments were compelled to bow before

them. As in 1891, the cry was again for open frontiers and the abolition of the food duties. Without interfering with the tariff, however, the Imperial Government agreed to the relaxation of the veterinary regulations relating to imported meat, which had been virtually prohibitive in effect, each State being allowed to decide how far it would go. Successful action to relieve the dearth on these lines was taken in all the larger States except Prussia, in which agrarian influence once more proved too strong for the Executive.

The rising resentment of the working classes took effect in the elections of 1912, when the Junker party experienced the worst defeat which it had suffered during the existence of the Imperial Diet; for the two Conservative groups together only won 57 seats, against 84 in the *bloc* elections of 1907, reaching the lowest ebb since 1874. The Centre, the National Liberals, and Radicals also lost ground. The great feature of the elections was the resurgence of Social Democracy. Whereas in 1907 the increase in Socialist votes had only been a quarter of a million, it was now a million; and in the aggregate four and a quarter million electors, or more than one in every three, voted the red ticket. The result was that the parliamentary party not only recovered the ground lost five years before but excelled all previous records, becoming with its 110 seats the strongest group in the Diet; thus for the first time in its history Social Democracy obtained a representation fairly proportionate to its voting strength. A party so strong had a claim to a share in the presidential offices of the Diet, and it was the unique experience of a Socialist member, an ex-printer of great ability, to be elected senior vice-president. As his colleagues promptly resigned office in protest, it fell to him to conduct the proceedings of the Diet until new elections could take place. In the end the Clericals secured the presidency for their nominee, with 196 votes against 175 given for the Socialist leader Bebel, and the first and second vice-presidencies also went to the loyal parties.

The cohesion and vitality of the Socialist movement were never shown more conspicuously than at this time, which was one of transition and grave inner conflict. Not only were the Revisionist tendencies making steady progress, but successive congresses revealed with increasing clearness the deep-seated antagonism between the North and the South upon the old question of the attitude of Socialist deputies towards parliamentary budgets. Ever since 1905 the

Revisionist movement, led by energetic men like Frank, Bernstein, Südekum, Vollmar, and Heine, had been steadily extending its influence. Originating in the impatience of the younger leaders of the party with the extreme doctrinarianism of the fathers of Social Democracy, the movement was in essence a demand that the party should honestly recognize facts and accommodate itself to them. Under the old leaders, who clung tenaciously, without doubt or question, to the Marxian faith as delivered to the first pioneers, Marxism had petrified into a Ptolemaic system whose basic assumption was that the laws of society had been laid down once for all in *"Das Kapital"* and were therefore unalterable. The Revisionists pointed out, first tentatively, yet with growing courage the more they were bidden to hold their peace, that the world had not progressed according to the Marxian formulas: that poverty was not progressive, that the doctrine of surplus-value contained only half a truth, and that the economic system which Marx was supposed to have discredited for ever showed no signs whatever of disintegration.

Above all, they insisted on the importance of pursuing practical politics, contending that Socialists would do better to trouble themselves less about the organization of an ideal society which existed only in their dreams, and to concentrate their efforts upon the immediate duty of reforming the social order and system of government which still held the field, and so of making the best of the world as they found it. With that end in view they invited their colleagues not to be too fastidious as to the means they employed, but to work openly and cordially with other parties pursuing corresponding aims. Dr. Frank, one of the leaders of the Revisionist wing, shocked his older colleagues when in the Imperial Diet in February, 1912, he frankly offered to co-operate with the Radical and Liberal groups in contending for such objects as the reform of the Prussian franchise, redistribution of seats both in Prussia and the Empire, and the introduction of a real system of Ministerial responsibility. It is probable that at that time a substantial majority could have been obtained for these measures if all the progressive groups had been willing to act together.

The attitude of the Socialist parties towards the budgets of the various parliaments had for years been a subject of acute controversy. Discussed at successive congresses, and particularly at those of

Dresden (1903) and Nuremberg (1908), it came again into prominence at the Magdeburg congress of September, 1910. By a subtle process of reasoning peculiar to themselves the North German Social Democrats had always held that, while it was perfectly proper for parliamentary deputies to take an active and even a leading part in the discussion of budgets, new taxes, and expenditure of every kind, even to the extent of voting for or against taxation bills and bills authorizing expenditure, they could not, consistently with their opposition to the principle of monarchical institutions, vote for a budget as a whole, even though it realized some of their most cherished theories and wishes. The more practical South Germans argued that to refuse to pass a budget after co-operating in its preparation and amendment was not merely inconsistent and a waste of time and energy, but was playing into the hands of the enemy, and on various occasions they had distressed their Prussian comrades by transgressing the party law on the subject.

In 1909 this offence was repeated by the Socialists in the Baden Diet, and their action formed the principal theme of discussion at the congress of the following year. Bebel led the attack against the rebels in a speech of three hours' duration; he was answered by Dr. Frank, one of the incriminated deputies; and the congress debated the question for several days. The fact that by voting for the budget the Baden deputies had helped a good financial scheme to success and had kept in office a sound progressive Minister, whom the Clericals had wished to overthrow, carried no weight with zealots jealous only for the sanctity of the law and the covenant, and in the end the duty of abstaining from budget divisions was restated and the offending deputies were censured by large majorities. Nevertheless, the refusal of the South German delegates to give any undertaking for the future made it clear that the difficulty had only been deferred and not settled. The practical effect of the controversy was to consolidate the Revisionist wing and convince its members that they were far stronger than they knew.

The party's congress of 1912 was the last which Bebel attended. He died in the following year (August 12, 1913), at the age of seventy-three, to the last militant, uncompromising, and confident in the ultimate triumph of the principles for which he had fought for more than half a century. Like many a party politician before him, Bebel

received from his parliamentary opponents far more praise at his death than in his life. It is a singular proof of the charity or shallowness of political controversy that with the disappearance of this doughty champion of a movement which they had been wont to execrate as treason to the State some of the harshest opponents of Socialism tardily discovered in its veteran leader merits, virtues, and accomplishments which they had never recognized before. His death may be said to have marked the close of an epoch in the history of the cause with which his name will ever be identified. He was the last of the great leaders who won the German working classes for Socialism and Socialism for the German working classes. All the older men with whom he had been associated in the storm and stress period of Socialistic agitation had predeceased him. The last of these died in the preceding year – Paul Singer, a retired tradesman of ample means, Jewish like so many Socialist leaders, almost superstitious in his Marxian faith, yet otherwise a man of well- balanced judgment, who did much to assuage party antagonisms, and was a consummate organizer. Bebel was now the last notable survivor of the local efforts of Lassalle out of which a vast national movement had sprung. As in years, so in ideas, he belonged to the older generation. He had forgotten nothing of the Marxian doctrine and had added nothing to it, but held with undiminished enthusiasm to his first devotion to a Socialism that knew no compromise, no half-way house, no easy byways, but only the one clear, final goal of a thoroughly democratized society, in which private capital and private enterprise should have no place. In the ardour of his allegiance to the undiluted doctrine of Marxism Bebel was frankly intransigent; yet if Marx was his oracle he was himself no less an oracle to the mass of Socialists, and to the last he ruled the party conclaves with a will of iron. True to the wise principle of using the big man only for the big tasks, the Executive seldom put him forward except on questions of critical moment; but when these occurred Bebel's word was paramount. There might be resistance, but it was almost sure to be that of a hopeless minority, which was discredited by the mere fact of opposing him, and as rule ended by apologizing for and then effacing itself.

So long as Bebel overruled the party the Revisionists had no chance of coming to the top, chiefly owing to the fact that the authority of the veteran leader was against them, but also owing to

their own unwillingness to exaggerate fundamental differences on points of doctrine and policy during his lifetime. The effect of his disappearance and of the greater freedom to which it gave rise was seen at the party congress at Jena in September, 1913, of which it was said that no congress had been so reasonable and none so dull. More than ever before moderate counsels were in the ascendant. Even the proposal to resort to a general strike as a means of securing franchise reform in Prussia was rejected on the recommendation of the Executive by 335 votes against 142. The general spirit of the proceedings created the impression that the doctrinaire members of the party were losing ground and that the Revisionists, no less convinced if more discriminating in their Socialism, and far more temperate in their methods, were surely winning recognition and influence. These men had for years warned the party of the impossibility of any short cuts to the Socialist millennium, and had called for the concentration of its thought and effort upon a practical programme realizable in the present, leaving the future to take care of itself. The Jena congress made it clear that the extremists had abandoned all hope of further dominating the Socialist movement and that the future lay with the right wing of the party.

Nevertheless, in spite of the growing ferment caused in its midst by new ideas, there was no trace of disruption; still, as ever, the Socialists remained a united party, offering to all its adversaries an unbroken front. Prince Bülow has written: “Only in a State whose citizens are accustomed to discipline, who have learned in the army unconditional obedience, who feel daily and hourly the stern pressure of the apparatus of administration, could a party organization so large and coherent as German Social Democracy originate.” Whether this explanation of the strength of Social Democracy is to the praise or blame of the German politico-military system is a question which must be left unanswered here, but the fact itself is indisputable. It may be, however, that the sociologist, taking a comprehensive view of modern social phenomena, will be disinclined to regard Social Democracy as a development altogether apart from the general tendency towards economic combination on a large scale which has fallen to recent decades. The co-operative movement, which has attained such large proportions both amongst the working classes and in agriculture, the industrial syndicates, and the powerful defensive organizations of

labour and capital which wield so great an influence in Germany are other notable illustrations of this tendency which have gained prominence during the past generation.

No such striking record of steady progress, and above all no such proof of unshakable unity of aim, can be claimed by any of the other political parties. Taking these in their sequence from the extreme Left to the extreme Right, the Radical (*Freisinnige*) or Progressist party has now for many years escaped the violent oscillations to which it was exposed during the Bismarck *régime*, though if now apparently a fixed star in the political firmament, it is one of minor magnitude. For if the party has in the main remained true to its first faith, it has purchased consistency by the periodical ejection of the waverers who have blocked the way. More pedantic and doctrinaire than any other group of German politicians, with the single exception of the Socialists, the acute divisions which have occurred in its ranks on critical occasions have almost invariably resulted in formal splits of varying importance. The last of these was caused by an Army Bill of 1893, on which occasion the party divided into two groups, one calling itself the Radical Union and the other – the remnant of the old stock, still clinging to the veteran leader, Eugen Richter – the Radical People's Party. Only in 1908, after the *bloc* formed by Prince Bülow had exhausted its usefulness for the purpose in view, and proved itself a union of incompatibles, did these groups make peace and reorganize themselves, together with the hitherto independent South German People's Party, as the Progressive People's Party. One of the best known parliamentary representatives of the party, Dr. Friedrich Naumann, has complained that German Radicalism suffers from "anæmia of spiritual force," and has traced this weakness to the absence of a sincere conviction that it is its duty "to devote itself absolutely to the cause of the people, humanity, and progress." It is true that the party as a whole is distinguished for attachment to abstract political principles rather than enthusiasm for humanitarian endeavours; and so long as this characteristic, which dates from its first beginnings, continues, so long will the party fail to attract to itself the large and ardent body of middle-class social reformers who, in default of a more congenial home elsewhere, now ally, without exactly identifying, themselves with Social Democracy. Dr. Naumann's ideal of a formal coalition of Radicals and Socialists, with the view to

the formation of a "great united Left," has hitherto proved impracticable, but since 1914 its prospects might seem to be no longer hopeless.

It is usual to speak of the Clericals as the Centre party. There are, in fact, two Centre parties in German parliamentary life, the second consisting of the National Liberals, who occupy a position between the Radicals and the Conservatives, with, for many years, a decided leaning towards the latter. For ever since the first decade of the Empire the National Liberals have belied their earlier record of progressive sympathies. To be just to them, they have been progressive and reactionary in turn; but owing to the lack of definite principles, and of consistent fidelity to such principles as they professed, they have more and more become a nondescript and invertebrate party, never certain to give to genuine Liberalism a helping hand in an emergency, and, as is the common and just meed of opportunist politicians, despised as enemies and distrusted as friends. Upon most political questions the party finds itself in agreement with Conservatism, from which it differs chiefly in the fact that it approaches these questions from another angle of vision – that of the great industrialists. Nothing has made this cooperation more easy or advantageous for both sides than their common interest in protective legislation, and so long as this bond of union continues National Liberalism will never be able to reassert itself as a true and powerful progressive force in political life. It juggles, as ever, with the arrogant word "National," but it is neither more nor less nationalist in sympathies and aims than the other middle-class parties; and in practice its nationalism merely connotes a readiness to support Ministerial policy with a lack of discrimination which was unknown during the time of its first and only great leader, Rudolf von Bennigsen.

While on the Left there have been repeated transformations and readjustments of party relationships, the Conservatives, and with them all the ideals and views for which Conservatism stands in Germany, have undergone little perceptible change. There is, it is true, now as ever, a difference between the Conservatism of the North and North-east, nurtured upon feudalist soil and imbued with strong military traditions, and that of the South, which has never been entirely inaccessible to vitalizing influences. The only Conservatism that

counts in practical politics, however, is the agrarian "die-hard" Conservatism of Prussia and the adjacent backward agricultural States; and its antagonism to political progress in any form is almost as strong and unbending as seventy years ago, when it endeavoured to prevent Prussia from becoming even a constitutional State. In this respect the Imperialist party, which also be longs to the extreme Right, is hardly to be distinguished from the Conservative party formally so called, and even were it disposed, it is numerically too weak to act as an effective check upon the extravagant tendencies of its allies, as shown particularly in their aggressive agrarianism.

The Clerical party or Centrum continues, as from the first, to maintain its sectarian basis and to represent primarily the interests of Ultramontanism and the Ultramontane view of things. Only the powerful confessional tie could have succeeded in preserving so long unbroken and undivided a party otherwise so heterogeneous in composition, for no other is in an equal degree an amalgam of the entire social life of the nation. The backbone of the party, however, are the peasantry of the South and the manual workers of the industrial States. The continued adherence of the former is hardly open to doubt. How far the party will succeed in retaining the active sympathies of the Roman Catholic working classes, for whom the ideal of a great national labour party and the *ignis fatuus* of the Socialist State are not without attraction, will largely depend upon the continued strength of the religious tie and upon the ability of the leaders of the party, priestly even more than lay, to appreciate the social signs of the times and the courage and success with which they adapt themselves to new conditions. A strenuous effort has been made to organize the Roman Catholic workers as a separate order, segregated from the rest of the labour world, and it has so far appeared to succeed. Nevertheless, it is notorious that in the larger towns these workers show an increasing disposition either to identify themselves openly with the Socialist trade unions, as the only really combatant labour organizations, or to combine surreptitious membership of these unions with adhesion to their confessional societies, as a supplementary form of insurance against capitalistic aggression.

The description of the various political groups as "fractions" is peculiarly applicable to a parliamentary system in which room is

found for no fewer than eighteen parties, large and small. Of the particularist or territorial parties the most important are the Poles and the Alsatians and Lorrainers. The Poles, while asserting party independence, can always be trusted, as a solidly Roman Catholic body, to vote with the Centre, and for the same reason most of the deputies from Alsace-Lorraine support that party on general questions. Of the other minor fractions, several – like the Guelphs, Danes, and Hessians – exist to keep alive old protests against absorption by Prussia, while the remainder for the most part represent more or less factious differentiations in social reform conceptions which have their root in the German passion for controversy.

It would be injudicious, at a time when, owing to an abnormal situation, political conditions and to some extent party relationships are in a state of transition, to attempt to anticipate the transformations which German parliamentary life may undergo in the near future. Nevertheless, it may be useful to state certain facts and considerations which must have a bearing upon any speculations of the kind. The battle royal between the Right and the Left, as representing respectively ultra-Conservative and progressive tendencies, and more concretely the alternatives of constitutional stagnation and advance towards parliamentary government as understood in Western countries, remains still to be fought. The multiplicity of parties which is the misfortune of German political life, and is not the least potent cause of the inability of the progressive forces to assert themselves effectively, has hitherto prevented any clear and direct conflict upon this fundamental issue. If at one extreme are the feudalists, who would abandon constitutionalism altogether, and with it the Empire itself, rather than countenance any further concession to the principle of popular sovereignty, at the other extreme are the Social Democrats – for many years by far the strongest party in the country and now the strongest party in the Imperial Diet – whose aim is the replacement of the monarchical by the republican system.

Not only has the adoption by the Socialists, with the uncompromising austerity of zealots to whom party programmes are sacrosanct and glittering abstractions more important than sober realities, of this unpractical standpoint prejudiced the cause of constitutional reform in the eyes not merely of its enemies but of moderate men, not on principle unfriendly to it, but it has made

impossible that “great united Left” to which the Radical leader looks as the presupposition of any genuine political advance. Meanwhile, the party of reaction has been the *tertius gaudens*, only too well pleased to see the constitutional cause blocked owing to lack of unity of aim on the part of two progressive forces which have every interest in working together.

How the two middle parties, the National Liberals and the Clericals, would range themselves in any contest upon the clear-cut issue of constitutional reform must be a matter of speculation. The National Liberals as a party have never taken up a merely negative, *non possumus* attitude on this question. In their early and more ardent days, when their Liberalism was thoroughgoing and vital, they did their best to give to the constitution such a democratic form as would have secured to the nation the substance of self-government without reducing the Crown to a cipher. Even during recent years a considerable section of the party has more than once given practical proof of its adhesion to the constitutional principle of Ministerial accountability, implying the subordination of the Government to the Diet. It is possible that the searching and chastening experience through which Germany, with the rest of the world, is passing may reinvigorate the Liberalism of this party and win its support for a bold forward movement in constitutional reform.

Still more uncertain is the attitude of the Clerical party, whose opportunism has ever been one of the *imponderabilia* of party politics. Prince Bülow truly said of the Centrum on one occasion that it has “always been an incalculable party, representing aristocratic and democratic, reactionary and Liberal, Ultramontane and National, and all other tendencies except one – the Social-Democratic.” A party so constituted is, in its nature, capable to a large degree of adaptation, and it would be unsafe to assume that the Centre, whose strength lies in the main in its popular sympathies and whose following in the country is made up predominantly of the working classes and the little people in town and country, would league itself with the parties of the Right in the event of a serious struggle for the extension of constitutional liberties. At present all that can safely be said is that the leaders of the Roman Catholic party have not fully made up their minds upon this subject. There are strong forces pulling both ways, but it is easy to see the grave risks that would attend a formal and

official determination to identify the party with the reactionary elements in political life. In illustration of a divided attitude in the ranks of the hierachy the fact may be mentioned that in 1918 Cardinal Hartmann removed from office the diocesan lay president of the Roman Catholic trade unions of West Prussia because of his active advocacy of franchise reform. The leading West Prussian Roman Catholic labour journal thereupon threatened that if that was to be the policy of the powers above, Roman Catholic workmen would have to consider the question of seceding from the confessional trade unions.

Whatever changes in party grouping the near future may bring with it, however, the fact should be remembered that the present impotency of the popular parties as a parliamentary force is due in no small measure to their under-representation under an electoral law which has never been amended since it was originally enacted nearly fifty years ago. The distribution of seats as fixed when the population of the Empire was forty millions, and the great migration from the country to the towns had not begun, continues to-day when the population is seventy millions and the proportion of the inhabitants resident in towns of twenty thousand and upwards has increased from one in eight to one in three. Even now, with proportional representation, the Radicals and Social Democrats alone, without counting the progressive members of the smaller fractions, certain to act with them on critical issues, could almost count on a clear majority in the Diet.

It remains to be added that all hopes and expectations of coming constitutional changes are subject to an important proviso – the fact that it rests with the Sovereigns, as represented by the Federal Council, to determine in the last resort, as coequal with the Diet in legislative power, whether such changes shall take place and how far they shall go. It is that fact which more than any other creates the obscurity of the outlook of the democratic cause in Germany and gives to speculation a merely academic interest.

Essentially a man of peace though he was, the years of Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg's Government were marked by feverish activity in military and naval preparations. In the early years of the Empire it was difficult to pass Army Bills, even when Bismarck was their advocate, with Moltke always in reserve, while to naval programmes the Diet would not listen at all. Latterly bills of both kinds were to be

had almost for the asking, and since 1907 neither the Clericals nor the Radicals dared to raise a voice in serious protest. Repeated additions had brought the peace strength of the army in 1912 to 544,- 000, exclusive of one-year volunteers. All past Army Bills, however, were insignificant in comparison with the special Defence Law of 1913, by which the Diet sanctioned the addition to the army at once of 4,000 officers, 15,000 non-commissioned officers, and 117,000 rank and file, as part of a scheme which would eventually give the army on a peace footing a strength of 870,000 men of all ranks. The Socialists were the only party of importance which offered to this new and unexampled demand flat resistance. They attributed the project to the insatiate imperialistic ambitions of the militarists and the Pan- Germans; yet while these parties had unquestionably done the pioneer work which made the project possible, there was no denying the fact that, from whatever motive – vigilance, fear, or love of conquest – the nation at large, with the exception of the working classes, accepted almost without question the assurance that the bill was necessary.

Two events of national interest helped to make its passage easier. One was the marriage in May of the Emperor's only daughter, Princess Victoria Louise, to Prince Ernst August of Cumberland, a union which closed the old feud between the Hohenzollern and Guelph families and gave back at least the throne of Brunswick to the dispossessed heir to the Hanoverian crown. The other was the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Emperor's accession, which occurred in June and evoked a cordial outburst of loyalty, of which the climax was reached when the rulers of all the States brought to Berlin their united congratulations. When the third reading of the bill was taken at the end of June only the Socialists, Poles, and Alsatians voted against it. The first cost of so large an addition to the army, together with the necessary barracks and a liberal provision for new frontier fortifications and for a large air fleet, was estimated at fifty million pounds.

The Defence Law created a very uneasy feeling abroad, and nowhere so much as in France. During the same summer the French Parliament replied to the challenge by voting forty million pounds, to be raised by loan, for the further increase of the army by the rigid enforcement of the three years' service system, as well as a progressive income tax, estimated to yield two and three-quarter million pounds a

year, to meet recurrent expenditure. Russia also accelerated the re-equipment of her army which had been in progress ever since she began to recover from the impoverishment caused by the war with Japan.

Similarly, the increase of the navy continued as before, though no longer unheeded by neighbouring countries. Great Britain in particular had ceased to be a passive spectator of German naval expansion, and was becoming seriously alarmed. Now many of the Emperor's unguarded disclosures of the working of his mind were recalled, like the phrases: "The trident belongs to our hands," "Sea power is world power," "Our future lies on the water," "The Admiral of the Atlantic salutes the Admiral of the Pacific," his declaration that he "would not rest until he had brought the navy up to the same standard as the army," and his claim that it was Germany's mission to "impose peace on the sea" as well as on the land. These utterances had fallen to a time – from 1897 to 1901 – when the German navy was small and its growth was still slow, because obstructed by parliamentary division, and for that reason they had excited in most English minds rather curiosity and uncertainty than positive unrest and apprehension. In proof of this it is only necessary to recall the fact that in basing the British Naval Defence Act of 1889 on a two-Power standard the Government of the day had in mind France and Russia. They acquired a new significance when a German policy of world-wide intervention had been avowed by a ruler who had behind him not only the strongest and best equipped army in the world, but a sea force of formidable proportions. With whatever premeditation and purpose these and similar winged phrases may originally have been coined, they now began to create grave alarm in a country whose food supply, commerce, prosperity, empire, and very existence were altogether dependent upon its naval supremacy. The British nation was divided into two parties, of which one demanded the concentration of all efforts, both technical and financial, upon the single object of making England's naval position as regards Germany not only absolutely but relatively stronger than before, the other wishful for an amicable agreement, based on reciprocal concessions, hoping by this means to avert the threat of a wild and insensate competition in naval expenditure which might eventually exhaust the resources of both countries and make impossible the realization of

great domestic reforms. The latter view was embraced almost generally by the Liberal party, which came into power in December, 1905, after being in Opposition uninterruptedly for over eleven years. The new Cabinet and House of Commons were emphatically bent on pursuing a pacific policy, and the only war of which the majority in either case would hear was a war against the Army and Navy Estimates. Faithfully interpreting the will of its parliamentary supporters and the mind of the nation, the Government decided to renew the efforts at disarmament which had been made without success by its predecessors several times before. In nearly every European country the burden of national defence had reached a crushing weight, yet the unreasoning rivalry in the production of instruments of war continued unabated. If there was to be relief, it could only come by concerted action, and to sanguine minds it seemed that there would be the greater hope of this if the initiative were taken by a country which could fairly claim ability to hold out longest in the competition, if competition it was still to be. The fact that a second International Peace Conference was near seemed to make the time specially appropriate for a serious attempt to lift the question of disarmament out of the arena of merely academic discussion.

The first time a British Government had held out the olive- branch on this question was in March of 1899, the year of the first Peace Conference. Mr. Goschen, the First Lord of the Admiralty in Lord Salisbury's last Cabinet, had then declared in the House of Commons that England would be prepared to reduce her programme of shipbuilding if the other great naval Powers would do the same, but there had been no response. The consequence was that while the conference held at The Hague in the following May established a tribunal of conciliation and arbitration for the adjustment of international disputes, all it was able to do for the cause of disarmament was to commend it to the sympathetic consideration of the Powers. Now in further practical proof of his country's good faith the Cabinet of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman announced (July, 1906) a large reduction in the naval estimates, hoping that its example would bear immediate fruit.

In the eyes of the Opposition parties this step seemed all the bolder, or more fatuous, by reason of the fact that Germany had just made another addition to her shipbuilding programme. That measure

had been justified, according to custom, by the demands of the foreign situation. Not only had the Russo-Japanese war, which broke out in February, 1904, revealed the rising Eastern island Empire as a new and formidable naval Power, but recent events of still greater importance for Germany were the conclusion in 1904 of the *entente* between Great Britain and France and the Morocco controversy of 1905, leading in the following year to the conference of the Powers at Algeciras, in which Germany found herself almost isolated. The super-battleship had also been launched from an English dockyard in the shape of the *Dreadnought* (February, 1906), and with this fateful innovation naval shipbuilding for all countries promised to enter a new phase marked by still more lavish expenditure, yet offering less prospect of finality than before. The third German Naval Law (June, 1906) had added six cruisers, but no new battleships, to the programme in hand; its principal significance lay in the importance attached to the building of larger vessels, to which end the expenditure already authorized was increased by one-third.

In view of all these circumstances the time was but little favourable to the consideration of disarmament proposals, and it can hardly have surprised the British Cabinet that Germany's reply to its pacific overtures was that she was determined to go her own way, and that she would have no reason for complaint if other countries did the same thing. Not only so, but the Emperor and his Government refused to take part in any discussion of the general question of disarmament at The Hague, and gave warning that Germany would stay away if the question was to be raised. The German objections to the reduction of the army were those advanced as long ago as 1869 and 1870, when, at the request of the French Government, Lord Clarendon unsuccessfully pressed disarmament proposals upon Bismarck – on the one hand, the country's military and geographical position, exposing it to special risks, and on the other hand, the fact that the size of the army was determined by the constitution, i.e. a given ratio to population. As to the navy, it was objected that inasmuch as it was being built in accordance with special laws, each binding for a period of years, any modification of the prescribed programme would be inconvenient and might meet with parliamentary resistance.

Accordingly, when the Peace Conference met in September, 1907, all it could do was to adopt a resolution commending the question of

disarmament to the sympathy of the Powers, though the British delegate, in the name of his Government, offered to exchange naval estimates in advance with any other Power that might be willing, in the hope of paving the way for more practical measures later.

In the following year a new Navy Law was passed (April, 1908). It accelerated the speed of shipbuilding by reducing the age of battleships and armoured cruisers by five years, and provided that by 1917 Germany should have fifteen large fighting ships more than were contemplated by the programme of 1900. Between 1901 and 1908 the naval estimates had increased from nine and a half to sixteen and a half million pounds, and now an average expenditure of nearly twenty-one million pounds was planned for the years 1909 to 1917.

Early in 1909 unrest was caused in England by reports that the German Government was pre-dating its statutory programme of shipbuilding, and it was concluded that the intention was to produce a further Navy Bill before the due expiration of the one in force. This unrest led to discussions in the House of Commons and also to inquiries in Berlin resulting in assurances that the apprehensions on the subject were baseless. In order, however, to provide against future misunderstandings, and possible unpleasant surprises, the British Cabinet suggested that the two Admiralties should keep each other acquainted, through their respective naval *attachés,* with the progress of the larger vessels, but the idea did not find favour in Berlin. Nevertheless, the British Government now deemed that the time for resolute counter-action had arrived, and from that year forward it adopted larger programmes of construction, which made it impossible that Germany could hope, at least for many years, to be more than a good second in the race for supremacy. At the same time well-meaning but inconclusive endeavours to arrive at a *modus vivendi* continued as before. Their sequel must be told in later pages.

Amongst the other legacies inherited by Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg was a legacy of debt, and this could only be liquidated by new taxation. The revenue derived from the various fiscal reforms introduced in 1909 fell far short of expectations, and in view of the larger expenditure entailed by the Army and Navy Laws of 1912 a favour hitherto shown to the brandy distillers, by the taxation of a certain quota of production at a lower rate than the rest, was withdrawn. For the rest a larger revenue from existing taxes, larger

receipts from the remunerative services, and economies in various directions were relied on. The Conservatives were ready enough to vote additions to the army and navy, but they were not equally willing to pay the bill. The Secretary to the Treasury at that time, Herr Wermuth, one of the soundest men who ever had charge of imperial finance, insisted upon the common-sense principle "No expenditure without provision to meet it" – provision in the form, not of loans, but new revenue – and recognizing how severely existing sources of taxation had been drained, he wanted to revive the death-duty proposals of 1909. Confronted by the opposition of the agrarians and the Clericals, and the Government declining to support him, he resigned in March, 1912.

The passing of the Defence Act of 1913 threw imperial finance once more into confusion. Fifty million pounds were needed to cover the first cost of this great measure, and it was estimated that the cost of maintenance would be two and three- quarter millions in the first year, rising to a maximum of nine and a quarter millions in three years. How were these large sums to be raised? The discussion of this question reopened the old controversy over direct *versus* indirect taxes. The Radicals and Social Democrats called for the taxation of income, capital, and real estate; the Conservatives and Clericals, ever with the dread of death duties before their eyes, advocated the increase of the customs duties as a simpler and more effectual method. The Government, however, refused point-blank to impose any new taxes which would make the cost of living still dearer to the working classes, and as its own proposal to levy high matricular contributions was unpopular, choice was ultimately narrowed down to the alternatives of an imperial income tax or a tax on real and personal estate. The compromise ultimately agreed to was a substantial victory for the principle of direct taxation.

By the Finance Law of 1913 a special national defence tax (*Wehrsteuer*) was imposed to meet the first costs of the equipment of the new army. It was to be levied once only on all properties, real and personal, of a value of £2,500 and upwards and on incomes of £500 and upwards, and was to be paid in three yearly instalments, the rate in the former case ranging from 0.15 to 1.5 per cent. and in the latter from 1 to 8 per cent. The recurring expenditure was to be met by a tax on increment in the value of real property, graduated from 0.75 to 2.5

per cent., properties not exceeding £1,000 and increment not exceeding £500 being exempted. At the same time the Government renounced the Empire's share in the proceeds of the existing unearned increment tax, which was given back to the States for the benefit of the communes as from 1915. The imperial probate duties were also raised, and the Empire's share in the proceeds was increased from two-thirds to four- fifths. As drafted, the measure made no provision for the taxation of reigning Princes, but the Socialists soon discovered the omission. In Committee the Conservatives and National Liberals still voted for their exemption, but the majority, and later a majority of the Diet, decided otherwise.

The way of every Minister of Finance is hard, and the periods in which the strain upon the German Imperial Treasury has relaxed and its custodian has been free from anxiety for the marrow have been rare and short indeed. Nevertheless, it would be fallacious to conclude that the cause of their constant failure to make both sides of the budget agree has been due to the absence of taxable sources of wealth. The explanation must be sought rather in the fact that on questions of finance the Empire and the States pull against each other, since the former is compelled by its growing liabilities to make ever larger demands upon the resources to which the States have likewise to look for their own needs. Thus every deputy is called upon to legislate in two capacities, as a subject of the Empire and as a subject of his "narrower fatherland," and the more he is identified with the political life of the State to which he belongs the less willing is he as a rule to assist the Imperial Government to restrict the financial rights of that State. So grudgingly have successive Diets granted new taxes that all the taxes introduced during the forty years 1873 to 1913 were represented in the budget for the latter year by the relatively small sum of sixteen million pounds out of a total revenue from taxes of all kinds of eighty-three millions.

Several further outstanding facts of the problem of imperial finance deserve notice. One is the large and growing proportion of imperial expenditure which is covered by customs duties. When the Empire was established only five million pounds a year were raised by these duties; the revenue from the same source had in 1913 increased sevenfold. Nevertheless, the opinion has long been general amongst thoughtful people that the system of indirect taxes has been developed

to the extreme limits of prudence, if not of safety, and even beyond the limits of equity, and that the taxation of food and the other necessities of life in particular bears with disproportionate weight upon the incomes and homes of people of small means. At the same time many of the subsidiary taxes which were warmly opposed in the early years of the Empire have since been introduced under pressure of growing expenditure caused by the insatiable demands of the army and, during the present reign, of the navy. These taxes include in particular the probate duties and the tax on capital. The Liberals still continue to demand an imperial income tax – to be fixed annually, as in the United Kingdom – not from a greater love of taxation than other people of normal minds, but because such a method of taxation would in their belief give to the Diet greater control over the purse and therefore over the Government. A further notable fact is the overwhelming proportion of the expenditure which falls to the army and navy and incidental services, like that of the debt, which has to a large degree been created by handing forward liabilities incurred on behalf of national defence. If outlay upon remunerative undertakings, like the imperial railways, post and telegraph, be disregarded, almost two-thirds of the annual expenditure are due directly or indirectly to these services.

The amount of the imperial debt in 1913, viz. 245 million pounds, seemed heavy in view of the fact that up to that time it had been incurred in times of peace, but when regarded as part of the public debts of Germany as a whole it ceased to be alarming. For while the debts of the Empire and States together exceeded in that year a thousand million pounds, only that of the Empire represented in the main non-productive expenditure. The debts of the States were as a rule represented by at least equal assets in the form of profit-yielding undertakings, like railways, canals, coal-mines, ironworks, and other industrial enterprises, the value of which in some States then exceeded the entire amount of the national debt.

FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1890-1904 - WELTPOLITIK

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IN ORDER TO OBTAIN the right point of view from which to judge the foreign policy of Germany under the third Emperor it is necessary to recall the ends which were constantly pursued by Prince Bismarck and the means by which he endeavoured to attain them. His steadfast aim was the maintenance at all costs of the peace of Europe, since peace was Germany's first interest and greatest asset, the condition of her prosperous development, and the pledge of her retention of the spoils of victorious war as harvested from 1864 to 1871. Never once did he swerve from this aim, and towards the end of his career he emphasized it with growing concern. In conversation with Signor Crispi on October 2, 1887, he said: "I labour for the maintenance of peace; I live for it alone. We have done enough for war; now let us work, and work together, for peace." But, further, since Germany's possible enemies were the Powers to the East and the West, it was necessary to render these Powers, if possible, harmless – Russia by conciliation, France by isolation.

In the policy which he built upon these leading ideas he seemed to succeed completely until the Berlin Congress of 1878 and the conclusion in the following year of the close union with Austria which in 1882 became, by the adhesion of Italy, the Triple Alliance. After these events trouble began. France was politically isolated as before, but so now, though in a less direct way, was Russia.

Although Bismarck increased his efforts to maintain, now, necessarily, in a more passive form, the old cordial relationship with St. Petersburg, he never doubted that Russia would sooner or later cease to be satisfied with a position which left her without active allies. The knowledge of the Czar's restiveness, as well as his own desire to obtain for Germany a double sense of security, was the explanation of the supplementary treaty which he concluded at Skiernievice in 1884, in virtue of which Germany and Russia gave reciprocal undertakings to observe benevolent neutrality in the event of either of them being attacked. That treaty, while it left the Triple Alliance in full force, brought Russia again to some extent within the ambit of German influence: as Bismarck said, the wire to St. Petersburg still remained uncut. For both sides the treaty seemed to be one of substantial value; on the one hand, Germany secured the continued advantage of the practical isolation of France, while, on the other hand, Russia benefited in that her pseudo-ally became in some

sort responsible for Austria's good behaviour. Later (as Caprivi told Hohenlohe in December, 1891) the treaty did even more for Russia, for under it Bismarck agreed to give her a free hand in relation to Bulgaria and, in certain eventualities, to Constantinople.

This was all in keeping with Bismarck's fixed maxim in Oriental policy, that Germany would best serve her own interests by holding her hand, whenever complications threatened, until events made it clear how she might bargain to the best effect for herself, as being "the Power which has least interest in Oriental questions and will gain the more the longer it holds up its stake." Already he had begun to count on Russia's occupation of Constantinople as a possible development, and he was even prepared to welcome it on terms. "We must not seek to prevent Russia from going to Constantinople," he said to Crispi several years later (May, 1889): "situated as she is, it is impossible to attack her. On the Bosphorus she would be weaker and might easily be overpowered. . . . As for the Sultan, we need not trouble ourselves about him. The Russians once established at Constantinople, the Sultan will accept their protectorate. If they leave him his harem, he will be quite satisfied." In any case he was resolved not to oppose Russian aspirations in that quarter unless compelled by the operation of the treaty of alliance with Austria. That was why he had objected to the Emperor's visit of friendship to the Sultan in November, 1889, as being contrary to the spirit of his policy, which was the maintenance primarily, not of the Ottoman, but of the German Empire. To the last he continued firmly convinced that no justifiable ground existed for a rupture with Russia, and that timely concessions on Germany's part, always at the expense of other States, would tide over any conceivable difficulty. When Caprivi succeeded to the Chancellorship in 1890 the Russo-German reinsurance treaty was still unknown to the outer world. In that year the treaty had to be either prolonged or abandoned. Bismarck had been wishful for its renewal, and Russia was of the same mind, but at the time of his dismissal in March the transaction was not completed. According to Busch, the negotiations had actually reached the point of signature when a change of Chancellors compelled their postponement. Caprivi's straightforward way of facing facts convinced him that the treaty was wrong. He believed that even in politics no man can serve two masters faithfully, and hence contended that the alliance with

Austria lacked complete sincerity so long as it was countervailed by this equivocal arrangement. Double agreements were well enough for political prestidigitateurs, but he had no mind or capacity for sleight of hand; he confessed that the whole arrangement was "too complicated" for him. He won the Emperor over to his view, and the treaty was allowed to lapse on the ground that it was incompatible with Germany's liabilities towards her ally, as, on a fine appreciation of the facts, it undoubtedly was. Caprivi told Prince Hohenlohe, his successor, that he had not prolonged the treaty, since, "had it become known," the Triple Alliance would have inevitably come to grief. Several other important considerations may have helped to determine the action of the new Government in the matter. It was believed in Berlin in the spring of 1890 that Russia wished to undertake at once the military occupation of Bulgaria, and that this was why the prompt prolongation of the treaty was desired. Had Bismarck still been in power, this prospect might have created no alarm. Only a short time before (February 6, 1888) he had told the Diet that Bulgaria was "assuredly not an object of sufficient magnitude" for Europe to fight about. So the Emperor and the new Chancellor may likewise have thought, but they were not prepared to run risks, and it seemed morally certain that to reopen the Balkan question in that way would bring Russia and Austria into the old antagonism. But, further, the abandonment of the treaty was deemed to be necessary in order to quiet once for all the persistent apprehensions which had been entertained for some time in Vienna that official Germany was in two minds about the Triple Alliance, and would not be indisposed to exchange Russia for Austria as an ally. Even Crispi, at his meeting with Bismarck in 1889, already referred to, noted "a certain coldness towards Austria in his conversation." Bismarck, for his part, suspected that there was running in France a strong current of feeling favourable to Austria, and he feared lest this feeling should be reciprocated.

Whatever change, if any, Bismarck might have given to Germany's relations with the neighbouring Empires, had he continued in office and in full control of foreign affairs, there seems ground for the belief that he had ceased to attach to the alliance with Austria the same importance as in 1879. He had entered into the alliance, as he entered into some other important commitments, impetuously, and against the judgment of the old Emperor, whose predilections drew him

powerfully to Russia, and who, had he been able to have his way, would still have been contented with the more flexible *entente*. That he was no longer satisfied with his own handiwork may be concluded from the fact that he had attempted to improve it by inviting into the partnership Great Britain, whose traditional sympathy with Austria was still unimpaired. In a private letter written to Lord Salisbury on November 22, 1887, with a view to allaying English official apprehensions of the reported strong Russian sympathies of the young Prince William of Prussia, and published only after many years, he had spoken of Great Britain and Austria-Hungary as belonging, like Germany, to the "saturated States" and consequently her natural allies, and had assured the British Premier that no German Emperor would ever assist Russia in weakening the Habsburg Empire. While down to the time of his retirement that assurance still held good, his faith in Austria as an ally had been rudely shaken with the growth of the Pan-Slavic movement, the effect of which was to force that country and Russia more and more apart. It is probable, if not certain, that if Bismarck had been compelled to make again in 1889 the choice which he made ten years before he would have reversed his decision. The truth is that upon this question, wary and resourceful master of political strategy though he was, Bismarck had landed himself between the Caudine Forks, and he knew it. To have abandoned Austria might have meant throwing her into the arms of France; to hold fast to her meant to risk the greater danger of a Russian alliance with the same Power. It was a great mistake of his foreign policy – the greatest, for this miscalculation was not the only one of his career. Never, however, would he have made the danger of counter-alliances more real by weakening the tie with St. Petersburg, since that tie, prudently fostered, enabled Germany to exert a restraining influence upon both of her neighbours.

In estimating the influences which determined Caprivi's Government to make this critical departure it is to be remembered also that the year in which the reinsurance treaty was allowed to lapse was also the year of the Anglo-German treaty, effecting the exchange of Heligoland for East African concessions, and apparently preparing the way for that more cordial co-operation with Great Britain for which the Emperor had seemed to work ever since he came to the throne. Russia, however, was still the bugbear of the British

Conservatives, who at that time were in power. Five years before (1885), in succeeding to the legacy of unpopularity which its early attitude towards Germany on the colonial question had brought upon the British Government, Lord Salisbury had recognized that, in the uncertain temper of France, a good understanding with Berlin was a vital necessity. Six years more were to pass before his formal repudiation of the idea of a "permanent and necessary antagonism" between Great Britain and Russia as "the superstition of an antiquated diplomacy."

For the present, however, the tradition which had been confirmed so emphatically by the Treaty of Berlin in 1878 was unbroken. The slighting of Russia was part of the price which the Emperor was prepared to pay in 1890 for British friendship. The step thus taken was not the less fateful because at the time it became known only to a limited circle. Bismarck, who later complained that by it "the most important part of his foreign policy" had been sacrificed and undone, waited six years before he disclosed the fact that the treaty of 1884 had existed at all.

Meanwhile, the Emperor tried to make good the loss of Bismarck's influence in foreign affairs by feverish exertions of his own. In the second half of 1890 he visited Queen Victoria, the Czar, and Emperor Francis Joseph. His reception in Vienna was enthusiastic, that in St. Petersburg correct but not cordial. In the following June the Triple Alliance was renewed for twelve years. At home the Emperor's continued attempts at this time to strengthen the ties with England were as unpopular as ever with the official and military classes, partly because of their traditional dislike of a country under free government, but also because they justly feared that in the existing tension of Anglo-Russian relationships friendly overtures in London would prejudice Germany in St. Petersburg. This opposition to his plans, of which he was fully aware, did not prevent the Emperor from visiting England again in July, 1891, and declaring in a speech in the Mansion House: "So far as it lies in my power I shall always maintain the historical friendship between our two nations, who have so often stood together in the protection of liberty and justice."

Now the abandonment of the reinsurance treaty, of which both the German and Austrian peoples as yet knew nothing, began to bear fruit. Bismarck could have told the Emperor and his new and untried

Chancellor what would be the first result of their daring departure from the policy which had been followed by himself so long and so scrupulously. The chance for which France had for years been waiting now came. Vexed at the renewal of the Triple Alliance, which still kept Italy in alien surroundings, and at the Emperor's effusive friendship for England, the Government of M. de Freycinet made formal overtures to St. Petersburg, and they were promptly reciprocated. In July, 1891, a French fleet under Admiral Gervais called at Cronstadt as part of a pre-arranged plan, and was there visited by the Czar. The festivities begun at Cronstadt were continued in the capital. The effect in Germany was to create a feeling of consternation, and nowhere more than in the imperial palace, and the feeling was intensified when in September the Czar passed through Berlin without stopping to greet and be greeted by the Emperor. Asked by Hohenlohe a little later how his relationships with the Czar stood, the Emperor replied: "I have none," and added: "I only write ceremonious letters to him now." For a long time prior to his dismissal Bismarck had maintained that the only tie that had kept Russia attached to Germany was the Czar's confidence in himself. In conflict with this belief was the remark attributed to the Czar by the Emperor, and repeated by him to Hohenlohe in August, 1892: "Whenever Bismarck had said anything to him he always had the conviction *qu'il me tricherait*." The probability is that the Czar had ceased to count on the fidelity of a country whose ruler and leading Minister could not be trusted to see eye to eye. There was no suggestion of a formal estrangement, but the old feeling of confidence had gone.

The year 1893 brought the return visit of a Russian fleet to Toulon, and the conclusion of a formal military convention between the new friends dated from December, though the fact and its full import were for some time concealed as carefully as the Russo-German reinsurance treaty had been concealed before. In 1895 M. Ribot, the French Premier, for the first time publicly spoke of Russia as "our ally," and when in June squadrons of French and Russian vessels attended the opening of the North-Baltic Sea Canal they ostentatiously entered the harbour of Kiel together. Nevertheless, it was only when, two years later (August, 1897), on the occasion of President Faure's visit to St. Petersburg, the Czar, Nicholas II, referred to "les deux nations amies et alliées," that the world knew for a

certainty that the republic and the autocracy were joined in a formal union as associates in peace and, if need be, as comrades in war.

Bismarck had long ceased to believe that differences of government would stand in the way of a Franco-Russian alliance if political interest could be served thereby. He held always that "for Russian policy there is a limit beyond which the importance of France in Europe must not be decreased," and he believed that the limit was reached by the Treaty of Frankfort. France does not readily forgive an injury, especially when the injury is done to her pride, but she also never forgets a kindness, and conscious of the gratitude of the French nation for the friendly intervention of the Czar and Gortchakoff when war threatened in 1875, Bismarck had from that moment counted upon a more cordial understanding between the two Governments and nations as one of the serious possibilities of the future. His private utterances as well as his public acts proved that to the last he was deeply sensible of the danger of a breach with either of these Powers, knowing that a war with one would in all probability mean a war with both. He confessed that "the idea of coalitions gave him nightmares," and the worst of these nightmares arose from the thought of an alliance of Russia and France against Germany. Always this possibility haunted him, and with it the fear that if such a trial of strength occurred things might not go as well with Germany as in 1866 and 1870. Busch, the recorder of so much of his table-talk, relates a conversation of 1888 in which he said: "It is not yet certain that Russia would take up arms against us, if we were again attacked by the French; but if the Russians were to declare war upon us the French would certainly join them at once, and in such a war we should not be so very certain to win, while it would be a great misfortune even if we were victorious." Only three months before his dismissal he said to Hohenlohe (December 15, 1889), when discussing the same contingency: "As far as we are concerned we shall begin no war with Russia or with France," adding that "at any rate the war would break out with both countries at once, and then it would be doubtful whether we should be victorious enough to be able to dictate terms to Russia."

The Franco-Russian alliance was a justification of Bismarck's policy, and by inference a condemnation of the policy which had replaced it; it also brought to light the fact, which the Emperor, in his

desire to be at peace with all men, had either never understood or had forgotten, that the day of purely dynastic attachments is past, and that in modern times a political union which does not rest upon the solid basis of national sympathy or community of interest must lack the elements of reality and permanence.

It was while under the influence of a quite honest resentment at the results of the abandonment of his policy towards Russia that Bismarck made known to the world for the first time, in the *Hamburger Nachrichten* of October 24, 1896, the existence of the reinsurance treaty of 1884. The disclosure, which served as the occasion for a violent attack upon the foreign policy which had supplanted his own, created a painful impression upon public opinion both in Germany and Austria, which hitherto had been kept in the dark, and while the skilful manœuvring to which he confessed proved that Bismarck's as tuteness had not been exaggerated, it cannot be said that it added to his reputation. Called upon by the Diet a month later (November 16th) to take it into confidence and make a clean breast of all the circumstances of the episode, the Chancellor, now Prince Hohenlohe, refused to draw aside the veil of secrecy, and only claimed that "the clouds of distrust which at first appeared in certain sections of the population of this country have again vanished." The Foreign Secretary, Baron Marschall, was equally reticent as to the inner history and the implications of the treaty, yet he "energetically repudiated the idea that any agreement was ever made by Germany that was incompatible with other international obligations; neither in spirit nor in letter was this done." At the same time he confessed that the existence of the two treaties placed Germany potentially in a position of great difficulty.

"According to paragraph 1 of our treaty with Austria- Hungary," he said, "we were bound to aid that country with our whole fighting strength in the event of its being attacked by Russia. A war between Austria and Russia would have raised the question whether we ought to remain benevolently neutral or go to the aid of Austria, and we should have been obliged to decide which of the two parties was the aggressor and which the attacked." In other words, while Bismarck had not done wrong in concluding the reinsurance treaty, his successor had done right in abandoning it.

The break with Russia was not the only proof that there had

entered into the foreign policy of the "new course" a spirit and a tendency altogether opposed to those which had been sanctioned by the usage and the successes of twenty years. With the disappearance of the old Chancellor, Germany found herself committed to a succession of foreign adventures and entanglements. Early in the 'nineties a phrase of ominous meaning, which will probably be searched for in vain in Bismarck's parliamentary speeches – until his retirement the only ones which he ever made – gained currency in German political life; it was the phrase *Weltpolitik* or world-politics. In the early years of the Empire it occurred to no serious German statesman that the destiny of his country would not be fulfilled unless it played a prominent part in world-affairs. "The pacific disposition of Germany," said Lasker, one of the ablest parliamentarians of his day, on April 27, 1877, "lies in the fact that she does not arrogate to herself world-jurisdiction, but confines herself to the preservation of her own interests." That was pre-eminently the attitude of Bismarck himself. While no statesman of his generation played so prominent a part in Continental politics, his interferences had always the clearly defined aim of maintaining such a "constellation" of the Powers as would keep mischief-making countries in order and safeguard the general peace. Never did he interfere for the sake of mere prestige; and regarding Germany as, in Metternich's phrase, an "*état saturé*," there was not a rod of Continental soil which he envied for her sake. All he asked of Germany's neighbours was that they would leave her to develop her resources in peace and tranquillity. In later years he even acquired colonies against his will, and to the last, after ceasing to be Chancellor, he declared that he was "no colony man." There is no reason to doubt Bismarck's good faith when he wrote in 1891:

" Germany is perhaps the single Great Power in Europe which is not tempted by any object which can only be obtained by a successful war. It is our interest to maintain peace, while without exception our Continental neighbours have wishes, either secret or officially avowed, which cannot be fulfilled except by war. We must direct our policy in accordance with these facts; that is, we must do our best to prevent war or to limit it."

The new Sovereign was no less pacific in intention, but a lack of constancy and discrimination frequently betrayed him into acts which were utterly at variance with his professions. His rejection of

Bismarck's guidance threw upon him the obligation to justify himself in the eyes of the world, and he proceeded to do this by reversing the old safe policy of restraint. No sooner was he free than he made it clear that as the first reign had witnessed the assertion of Germany's influence in Europe, the mark of his own reign was to be the assertion of that influence across the seas. Emperor William II appropriated not a few of the maxims of his ancestor, Frederick the Great, but one of the most sagacious he altogether disregarded: "All distant acquisitions are a burden to the State. A village on the frontier is worth more than a principality two hundred and fifty miles away." Many of his speeches in the first few years following Bismarck's dismissal were open appeals for support in the pursuance of a spirited foreign policy. In these speeches will be found many sentiments like the following:

"Nothing must henceforth be settled in the world without the intervention of Germany and the German Emperor."

"Present events invite us to forget internal discord; let us be united in case we should be compelled to intervene in the politics of the world."

"The ocean proves that upon it and far away beyond it no great decision can any longer be taken without Germany. I do not agree that our German nation has for thirty years conquered and bled under its Princes in order to be pushed on one side in foreign affairs. To prevent this by suitable and, if necessary, severe measures is my duty and my highest privilege."

It is true that emphatic protestations of peaceful intentions often accompanied utterances of this kind, but rightly or wrongly, it was the explosive and aggressive spirit of the Emperor's oratory that most impressed Europe, and this, together with the constant increases in the army, and later in the navy, created widespread unrest and apprehension. The weakness of German foreign policy at that time lay in an instability and uncertainty of purpose, a lack of clear foresight, and above all in a conflict of tendencies, for again and again the quiet work of the Chancellery was thwarted and stultified by the Emperor's exuberant speeches and impetuous acts. How far Germany here departed from the traditions of Bismarck may be judged by comparing *dicta* like the foregoing with the cautious words of Bismarck, spoken on February 8, 1888, when the first Emperor was still under his guidance:

"Every Great Power which seeks to exert pressure on the politics of other countries and to direct affairs outside the sphere of interest which God has assigned to it carries on politics of power and not of interest; it works for prestige."

Yet the audience to which the Emperor addressed himself was not unresponsive. The military and colonial parties applauded him, and he became the idol of the *All-Deutscher Verband* or Pan-German League. This imperialistic organization grew out of a less influential society which had been formed in 1891, with the name "General German League" (*Allgemeiner Deutscher Verband*), for the encouragement of Germanism abroad. Under the direction of a Leipzig publicist, Professor Ernst Hasse, the aims of this society had gradually taken a more aggressive and Chauvinistic form, and in 1902 its name and constitution were changed in sympathy with its larger scheme of propagandism. Covering the whole country with a network of branches, each one a powerful centre of organization and agitation, the reconstructed League appealed to the nation with a programme of territorial aggrandizement which sought to give concrete expression to the vague aspirations of the more idealistic forerunners of the Pan-German movement – the poets and philosophers of a century before. Its object now became the creation of a Greater Germany, which should comprise all the Germanic peoples, irrespective of geographical areas. Hence it was contended that to the larger fatherland must belong the German parts of Austria and of Switzerland, Holland, Luxemburg, and even part of Belgium. None of the non-Germanic races were to be put out of the Empire, but the Germans outside were to come in. Serious politicians smiled at the idea as irresponsible and fatuous: it was both, yet it nevertheless took root and made quick growth, with the result of creating in the countries whose integrity was threatened great unrest and deep and justifiable resentment. Perhaps no body of political propaganda has on the whole exercised a more sinister or more immoral influence upon a nation's mind than that of this powerful organization, whose predatory doctrines implied the practical repudiation of international faith and the negation of public right.

It was one of the ironies of German foreign policy in the early 'nineties that the new doctrine of foreign intervention was first applied practically in relation to the affairs of the country with which

the Emperor had seemed specially desirous to be on good terms. One of the first effects of the "cutting off of the wire" between Berlin and St. Petersburg had been to strengthen his resolve to win England if she were willing to be won. For several years he paid regular visits to Osborne, and on these occasions he lost no opportunity of meeting British Ministers and statesmen. In spite of large reservations on both sides, there existed at that time a widespread mutual desire for a *rapprochement*, though it is probable that this desire proceeded less from conscious inner sympathy than from considerations of prudence and caution, for which the political situation afforded abundant justification. Unfortunately for the later relationships of the two nations the movement received a serious check before it had had time to gather strength and become a real force in the public life of either country.

That the Emperor was ever quite clear about either the strength of his intentions or the depth of his sympathies might appear to be an assumption difficult to reconcile with his early action on the Transvaal question. Until the time of the irresponsible Jameson raid of December 31, 1895, nothing had occurred to mar the effect of the African colonial convention of 1890. In 1895 the Emperor was in England as usual, and in June a British fleet took part in the festivities at the opening of the Kiel Canal. Then came the telegram to President Krüger of January 3, 1896 (following the receipt in Berlin the night before of news from London of the defeat of Jameson's troops at Krügersdorp), wherein the Emperor said:

"I sincerely congratulate you that, without making any appeal for the help of foreign Powers, you have succeeded with your people and your own strength in repulsing the armed bands which have troubled the peace of your land, in re-establishing order, and in defending the independence of your people against attacks from without."

The famous telegram has since been a subject of profuse controversy. Considering the treaty relations between the Transvaal and Great Britain, the suggestion that foreign Powers – with Germany at their head – would have intervened had they been asked, was in the highest degree provocative, whether intended to be so or not. Nor can it be claimed in extenuation of the Emperor's act that these treaty relations were unknown to his Government, since the German commercial treaty with the republic, concluded in 1885, had been

submitted to the British Government for approval before signature. It was understood later that before the despatch of the telegram the Foreign Secretary, Baron Marschall, invited the French ambassador in Berlin, M. Herbette, to say whether his Government would join with the Government of the Emperor in inviting diplomatic intervention by the European Powers on behalf of the independence of the Transvaal, that he was asked in return whether Germany would be prepared to support France in pressing England in Egypt, and that as an undertaking on the latter point could not be given, France declined to be implicated.

While the Emperor has ever since borne the onus of this fateful intrusion into South African politics, the telegram was, as Prince Bülow later admitted (March, 1909), “an act of State” and “the result of official consultations,” and was “in nowise an act of personal initiative” on his part. It was, in fact, supported at the time by an official declaration by the Government that it regarded the continuance of the independence of the Transvaal Republic and the Orange Free State as for Germany an important political and commercial interest. In fairness both to the ruler and his Government it should also be said that they faithfully voiced the feeling of the nation, which now again, after long intermission, gave the Sovereign enthusiastic assurances of its complete support. The British Government answered the challenge by promptly commissioning a flying squadron and calling attention to the existence of the London Convention of 1884.

It is probable that the man who suffered the bitterest disappointment as a result of this episode was President Krüger. Krüger, who came to power in 1883, had ever since astutely traded upon German sympathies. He visited Berlin in 1884, and was cordially received by the Government and the population. That he seriously entertained the design, which has often been attributed to him, of placing the Transvaal Republic under direct German protection may fairly be questioned. He was in his way a skilful intriguer, however, and there can be little doubt that he would have welcomed – he may have even encouraged – the intervention of Germany in South African politics, as a countervailing force hostile to complete British hegemony, hoping that the Transvaal would benefit by the complications which would inevitably result. From the beginning of

the ‘eighties German attention had been directed in an increasing degree to the South-east African coast, and particularly to Delagoa Bay. A project much discussed both before and after Krüger’s visit to Berlin was the construction of a German railway from the Bay to Pretoria with a view to flooding the Transvaal with German emigrants. Nothing more was heard of that scheme after 1896.

The immediate effect of the Krüger telegram and the controversy to which it gave rise was the creation both in Great Britain and Germany of resentful feelings, which never entirely disappeared. Nevertheless, the Government of Berlin clearly drew from the events of that time the conclusion that South Africa could never safely be made the pivot of its foreign policy in relation to Great Britain. Later, when the Boer war broke out, it did its best to atone for an unaccountable miscalculation, but without receiving in England the thanks which were expected. In the meantime it had given other signs of a desire to see the episode assigned to oblivion. When in 1896 the British Government sought approval for its proposal to charge the Egyptian Treasury with the cost of an expedition against the marauding dervishes Germany at once assented, while France and Russia both refused. In April, 1898, the Emperor congratulated Queen Victoria on Kitchener’s victory over the dervishes at Atbara. In that year also the two Powers concluded a treaty (September) defining their attitude towards the Portuguese colonies. It seemed likely at that time that Portugal, in order to ease her financial position, might find it necessary to sell her colonial possessions, or some of them. It was therefore agreed that if the opportunity offered Germany was to be free to acquire the southern part of Angola (adjacent to German South-west Africa) and the northern part of Mozambique (adjacent to German East Africa), while Great Britain was to be able to acquire northern Angola, the southern part of Mozambique, as well as Madeira, the Azores, and the Cape Verde Islands. It is probable that the treaty soon came to the knowledge of the Portuguese Government, for in the following year the old Anglo-Portuguese alliance, dating from the reign of Charles II, was renewed by the Treaty of Windsor. In 1899 the British Government gave even more marked evidence of its desire to live in amity with Germany by the conclusion of the Samoan Conventions of November and December, by which Great Britain withdrew altogether from the Samoan archipelago, whose civilization

owed so much to English missionary enterprise, and Germany was established in the islands of Sawaii and Upolu, and the United States received the island of Tutuila.

In October of the following year came the Boar war. In March Mr. Cecil Rhodes, visiting Berlin for the purpose of seeking help for his railway and telegraph projects, had met the Emperor and enlightened him upon aspects of the Krüger *régime* which had hitherto been ignored or insufficiently regarded by his Ministers. Long before hostilities began the Boer President had received from Berlin the advice to agree with his enemy while he was in the way, and the subsequent endeavours made by the Transvaal Executive to win the support of Continental Governments received no official encouragement in that quarter. In pursuing this policy of non-intervention, so unlike the attitude adopted four years before, the Government was entirely alienated from the Diet and the nation, with which the South African war was intensely unpopular. Political parties, indeed, justified their hostility to Great Britain by much talk about humanitarianism, though in reality far more concerned at the prospect of a further extension of British dominion than for the fate of the Dutch republics.

It was due to the refusal of the German Government to cooperate that a proposal of mediation, made by Russia with the encouragement of France, was abandoned. The proposal was not in itself unnatural in the circumstances, for the idea of international arbitration had just before been brought down from the clouds to earth in a striking way. Europe had for a long time been an armed camp. Not only had the Great Powers taxed their resources to the utmost in the creation of huge armies, which every year became greater, but the minor States, even to the little principalities of the Balkans, had followed the example of their strong neighbours. Appalled by this spectacle of prodigal waste, and foreseeing that unless it were checked the end would be catastrophe, the Czar of Russia, in an impressive rescript of August 24, 1898, invited the Powers to confer upon ways and means of escaping from the thraldom to armaments beneath which they had allowed themselves to fall.

The result of his action was the summoning of the Peace Conference which met at The Hague in May, 1899. There the British delegates had supported the principle of international arbitration

more cordially than those of most of the Powers which had taken part. Count Muravieff, the Russian Foreign Minister, who had been closely identified with the Czar's ideas, now proposed that England should be allowed to prove her words by acts, and he invited France and Germany to join Russia in offering mediation. Prince von Bülow told the Diet later (November, 1908) that "in no quarter and at no time was the idea of any kind of mediation except peaceful mediation, with the assent of England, entertained." Nevertheless, Germany refused to take part, and, visiting London in November, the Emperor and his Chancellor gave the impression that the reason for her refusal was the discovery that the peace overtures were intended to be a hostile demonstration against England. Encouraged by the cordiality of their reception and the gratitude shown for their timely sympathy, the German visitors went so far as to suggest that as England now knew who her real friends were it would be a suitable opportunity for joining the Triple Alliance. The invitation was declined; but that a change had come over the official British attitude towards Germany at that time was shown by a speech made at Leicester in December by Mr. Chamberlain, then Colonial Secretary, in which he advocated a new alliance between Germany, America, and Great Britain, who together were to be the arbiters of the world's peace, and a little later by a more or less informal suggestion, made by the same statesman, that Germany should be an active participant in the partition of Morocco.

A second invitation to Germany to join Russia and France in mediation, made in the following March, had the same result, and when at the end of the year the Boer delegates were welcomed and fêted in France and other countries they were refused an official welcome in Berlin. The Chancellor would have been willing to advise their reception by the Emperor provided they were introduced by the British ambassador and undertook not to raise an anti-British agitation. As, however, compliance with these conditions was refused, the desired audience did not take place. To all the public appeals which were raised on behalf of the stormy petrels of South Africa Bülow turned a deaf ear. He even spoke slightingly of the "Boer hubbub," told the Diet (December 13, 1900) that he could not "conduct foreign policy from the standpoint of pure ethics," and while disclaiming any idea of being influenced by love of England, refused

point-blank to “play the part of a Don Quixote and tilt at English windmills” at the dictation of politicians who allowed their reason to be overruled by sentiment. It was again, as so often in Bismarck’s time, a case of irresponsible agitators breaking windows and leaving the Government to repair the damage.

The effect of the Transvaal war, and of the bitter controversies which it created in both countries, was to leave Anglo- German relations worse than before. Nevertheless, the Emperor still seemed firmly resolved to seek the reconciliation of the two nations. His visit to Queen Victoria in her last illness and his presence at her funeral in January, 1901, met with a very warm response in England. In the following year the Prince of Wales was his guest at Potsdam in January; he invited Lord Roberts and several British generals to the autumn manœuvres, and bestowed upon them many marks of distinction; and in November he visited King Edward at Sandringham. These, however, were all personal courtesies, and while they gave satisfaction to peace-lovers in both countries, they left untouched the deeper currents of national feeling.

In the meantime Germany had been busy in the Far East, where she now, for the first time, obtained a foothold. Her interests in China were of a commercial order, and her political relations with the country had been confined to her cooperation with Russia and France in compelling Japan to give back the Liao-Tung peninsula, including Port Arthur, which China had ceded, together with Formosa, to the rising island empire under the Treaty of Shimonoseki at the close of the war of 1894-5. For that service to China France obtained her next loan, while Germany received only the assurance from the Czar that he would have no objection if she were to acquire a piece of Chinese territory for use as a coaling station. Two years later this suggestion was acted upon. In the autumn of 1897 two German Roman Catholic missionaries were murdered in the Chinese province of Shantung. In expiation Germany demanded and obtained the lease for ninety-nine years of the part of Kiauchau in that province, to be used as a naval station. It was only a small acquisition, but suspecting that a hankering for “prestige politics” was behind the transaction, Bismarck said of it at the time that it was “large enough for all sorts of foolishness.” A little later China granted to her new neighbour important railway and mining privileges in the same region, and early

in the new year the Emperor's brother, Prince Henry, took over the protectorate amid due state. In a parting address to his envoy at Kiel (December 15th) the Emperor said: "The task which you have to fulfil denotes nothing new; it is the logical consequence of what my grandfather and his great Chancellor began . . . it is the first participation by the newly established German Empire in its duties across the seas." The then Foreign Secretary, Bülow, stated a few weeks later (February 8, 1898) that "the despatch of our squadron was the result, not of sudden impulse, but of mature deliberation and the expression of a policy calm and sure of its end."

Deliberate and calculated though this bold stroke of *Weltpolitik* may have been, it led to results which could not have been anticipated. Germany's example proved the signal for a scramble for Chinese territory by the leading European Powers. Russia promptly obtained Port Arthur, from which she had ejected Japan three years before; England stipulated for Wei-Hai-Wei; and France for Hainan and Kwang-Chow-Wan. All these territories were for decency's sake acquired on lease, though with little idea of again parting with them. When finally Italy put in a claim for Sanmen Bay, the Chinese Government thought it time to cease her forced benefactions.

Encouraged, no doubt, from above, the traditional prejudices of the Chinese against foreigners deepened into hatred, and in the summer of 1898 the Boxer rising broke out, leading to wholesale massacres of the white population and of native Christians. The English and American victims, for the most part members of the religious missions, alone numbered two hundred, and reliable estimates placed the number of native Christians murdered as high as thirty thousand. Amongst the victims of Boxer excesses were the German Minister, Baron von Ketteler, and the Japanese Minister, Baron Sugiyama. No allowance was made for Chinese provocation in the prompt reprisals which followed. While Japan hurried a large number of troops to the scene, the principal European Powers and the United States all sent expeditionary corps, and the joint forces were placed under the German general, Count Waldersee. A large combined fleet also assembled in Chinese waters. The Emperor's address to his officers and troops prior to their departure from Bremerhaven on July 27, 1900, in which he charged them "in the name of their oath" to give no quarter to the enemy, and "so to use their weapons that for a

thousand years no Chinaman would dare to look sideways at a German," was often recalled to his prejudice in later years. Pekin, which had long been in the hands of the rebels, was relieved in the late summer of 1900, only to suffer more from the rescuers than the Boxers, for it was ruthlessly looted. The Chinese Government had no other choice than to accept the terms imposed by the allies, these including the payment of an indemnity of sixty-six million pounds and the despatch of expiatory missions to the German and Japanese Courts. The mission to Germany was headed by Prince Chun, a member of the reigning family, and it discharged its task in September, 1901.

Having done their best to break up the Chinese Empire, the European Powers now discovered that their interest lay in strengthening it again. Germany and England, during Lord Salisbury's Government, concluded a convention of October, 1900, pledging them to respect the integrity of China and to maintain the policy of the "open door." Later the two Powers were disagreed as to the extent of this agreement, England contending that it bound them to resist Russian advance in Manchuria, which had already begun, Germany that it applied only to China proper. Upon this question the policies of the two Powers soon went apart, for Japan again entered the field as a brake to Russian aggression, and by a treaty of January 30, 1902, she became Great Britain's ally. By this treaty the two Powers undertook to recognize the territorial integrity of the empires of China and Korea, to abstain from acts of aggression therein, to maintain a strict neutrality in the event of either of them becoming involved in war in defence of its interests in these countries, to endeavour to secure the neutrality of other Powers, and to conduct war in common in the event of any other Power or Powers joining in such hostilities.

The importance of this alliance was seen when two years later Russia and Japan found themselves at war. The Treaty of Shimonoseki of 1895 had inflicted upon Japan a humiliation which rankled deeply, and when Russia followed the annexation of Port Arthur by the occupation of Manchuria (1900) and the other Powers, which had been so jealous for the integrity of the Chinese Empire, similarly appropriated portions of Chinese territory, it was evident that Japan had a score for which she would sooner or later require a reckoning. Step by step Russia now advanced from Manchuria into Korea, and, as

diplomatic protests led to no result, Japan declared war in February, 1904.

Again, as in 1895, Germany sided with Russia, this time more actively than before. German shipping companies were allowed to sell four large merchant cruisers to the Russian Government; German war material was freely supplied; the Russian fleet shipped German coal in the Baltic before its despatch to East Asia; and so marked was the Emperor's goodwill that Russia was able to denude her western frontier of troops, as Prussia had been able to do in 1866 owing to the benevolent neutrality of France. Although numerically far superior to her rival in military and naval resources, Russia was beaten both on land and sea after a struggle in which desperate endurance and superb courage were shown on both sides. Japan's crowning victories were the capture of Port Arthur after a siege of three months (August 14, 1904), the sanguinary battle of Mukden (March 10, 1905), and the seafight of Tsushima (May 27th), in which the entire Russian fleet engaged was either sunk or captured. The war dragged on for two months longer, but in the meantime the combatants had accepted an offer of mediation made by the President of the United States, and peace was concluded in August and ratified by the Treaty of Portsmouth, U.S.A. (September 5th). Russia ceded to Japan half of the island of Saghalien, which she had annexed in 1875, and Port Arthur, with the Kwangtung peninsula, which she had occupied since 1900, and undertook to hand back Manchuria to China and to recognize Japan's right to a controlling influence in Korea, which that country later annexed.

Germany, by her encouragement, was believed to have helped Russia into the war with Japan; England, by her sympathy, helped her out of it. It was largely due to the influence of that Power with its ally that Japan showed great moderation in the hour of victory, setting greater store on future good relations with Europe than on present advantage. Nevertheless, she gained what for her was vital – a foothold on the mainland and a promising sphere of influence for the abounding activities of her people. Nor was the war altogether a misfortune for Russia, for the internal disorders to which it gave rise led by devious and thorny ways to constitutional government and the institution of a Duma, or national parliament. The German Emperor had decorated both the attacking and defending generals (Nogi and

Stoessel) of Port Arthur fame, yet he made no secret of his belief that Japan's victory was a misfortune for Europe and civilization. In March, 1905, he told his recruits at Wilhelmshaven that the victorious Japanese were for Russia "a scourge of God, like Attila and Napoleon in their day," and bade them take heed "lest the Almighty should send a similar trial to Germany"; while in a speech to his officers at Strassburg in the following May he spoke of the "yellow peril," and warned them that as Russia had been unable to withstand it the duty might one day fall to Germany. A speech from the throne, opening the Diet in November, contained a passage in which Japan was welcomed into the ranks of the Great Powers, but the compliment did not alter the fact that Japan had won her position in the face of Germany's active opposition.

Another of Germany's excursions into *Weltpolitik* was more chivalrous than successful. During the Spanish-American war over Cuba in 1898 she took the side of the European Power, and at one time during the blockade of Manila Admiral Dewey had to threaten to turn his guns upon the too officious German vessels of war which were then lying off the coast. After the war Spain showed her gratitude to Germany by agreeing to sell her the Caroline Islands. Germany had claimed the islands as no-man's-land in 1885, but on Spain's protest, on the ground of prior possession, the question of title was referred to Pope Leo XIII, who decided against Germany, but awarded her certain trading rights. Now Germany acquired the islands, and with them the Marianne and Pelew islands, for the sum of £800,000.

The Manila incident had created coolness between Germany and America, and as soon as peace was restored the Emperor, whose proneness to do the wrong thing was conjoined with a singular readiness to recognize his mistakes and rectify them, made the task of reconciliation his own. Pleasing attentions of many kinds were now showered upon the republic in sign that its good-will would be valued. In February, 1902, he sent his brother Prince Henry on a special mission of friendship to President Roosevelt and the American people; but the genial visitor lamented later that while he had seen much of the German-Americans, he had been allowed to see little of the true Americans. In May he presented to the American nation, for erection in Washington, a statue of Frederick the Great. To Harvard University

he gave a unique collection of casts of the finest examples of mediæval German sculpture and architecture, taken from cities and towns of the West and South. He also waived in favour of America the rule, which had been laid down in Bismarck's time, that German diplomatic representatives should not marry foreigners. Momentary apprehensions were occasioned when in the succeeding winter arbitrary action by Venezuela led to reprisals, in which Germany took part. The Venezuelan Government had refused to recognize liability for loans and stores forcibly requisitioned from German and other foreign merchants during the civil war of 1898 to 1900, and as all representations made by the States concerned were disregarded, a combined German, British, and Italian fleet blockaded the Venezuelan coast in December, replying to land fire at several points, yet not landing troops. In the United States the naval demonstration was unnecessarily interpreted by a nervous public opinion as a challenge of the Monroe Doctrine, but few reasonable public men took that view. Eventually the dispute was referred to the Court of Arbitration at The Hague, which decided against the Venezuelan Government. In the summer of 1903 the friendly relationship with the United States was so far restored that an American squadron visited Kiel, where a cordial official welcome awaited it.

To the friendship which sprang up between the Emperor and President Roosevelt at that time was due the inauguration of a plan for a yearly exchange between the two countries of representative professors, one on each side, the American professor lecturing at Berlin and the German at Harvard. The idea originated with Dr. Althoff, perhaps the most enlightened but also the most dictatorial Minister of Education Prussia has ever had, and it took effect in 1905. The original "exchange" professors, as they were called, visited for a single term; but this official system was supplemented by another, due to the formation in America of a fund in connection with Columbia University, whereby, in addition, professors of American universities were enabled to exchange places with professors of any German universities for two successive terms.

In his search for new spheres of influence abroad the Emperor in his own person made overtures to Turkey in 1898. The way had already been prepared by the appointment as ambassador to Constantinople of the strongest man in the diplomatic service, Baron

Marschall, who left the Foreign Office the year before in order to undertake that important post. Marschall at once introduced a new departure in diplomatic usage. While other ambassadors, notably the British, had clung to the idea that diplomats were concerned only with high politics, their German colleague, overflowing with energy, began to cultivate diplomacy from the neglected commercial side. The British way may have been the more dignified, but the German way secured the material and subsequently the political rewards. Now German adventurers – engineers, railway contractors, banking agents – poured into Constantinople, bringing with them attractive projects warranted to confer prosperity upon the Sultan's territories and to replete his impecunious coffers. For these projects a ready hearing was obtained at the German embassy, and with its support at Yildiz Kiosk. Fortified by this material argument, German influence waxed, while British influence waned. The prestige of Germany in Turkey was further increased, both politically and economically, by a visit paid to the Sultan, Abdul Hamid II, by the Emperor while on his way to Palestine, in October, 1898. Toasting the Sultan at Damascus before his return home (November 8th), the Emperor used the cryptic words, "May the Sultan and the three hundred million Mussulmans scattered over the earth be assured that the German Emperor will always be their friend." Only two years before the name of Abdul Hamid had been execrated throughout Christendom by reason of the renewed massacres of Armenians which had been perpetrated with his direct connivance. It was regarded as a curious testimony to the tolerant spirit of modern statecraft that a Power which had immemorially claimed to be the bulwark of Protestantism on the Continent now stood forth as the Sultan's special friend. England had in the past cultivated ties with Turkey more intimate than the nation as a whole approved, but she had as the price of friendship gained important concessions for the benefit of the Christian populations under Ottoman rule – for some independence and for all greater security for religion, liberty, and life. About Germany's relations with Turkey there was no sentiment whatever, and the contrary was never pretended. As a later Chancellor (Bülow) said, they were based altogether on political expediency and commercial interest, and in that light both sides viewed them. Not only was Germany at that time engaged in commercial enterprises in the Turkish Empire, but chosen officers of

her General Staff were reorganizing the Turkish army and her armament firms were supplying it with cannon.

The Emperor's visit to the East was a political and commercial tour on an imposing scale, intended to *viser* the efforts of the diplomatic agents who had for some time been busily preparing the way. From that time the German Foreign Office and its representatives in Turkey pressed more energetically than ever for trade concessions, and were more successful in obtaining them.

A year later the Sultan handsomely repaid the attentions which had been showered upon him by granting to a German banking combination, calling itself the Imperial Ottoman Railway Company, a railway concession of very elastic proportions. This company was an offshoot of the German Anatolian Railway Company, which had already built a line from Haidar Pasha (opposite Constantinople on the Asiatic side of the Straits) to Angora and Konia. Now it was proposed to carry this line through the valley of the Tigris to Bagdad and beyond. Not only was this new evidence of German enterprise a blow to British pride, but there was a peculiar irony in the fact that the Anatolian railway was built by an English company, which afterwards handed it over to a far-seeing syndicate of German banks.

The Bagdad Railway project, which was for many years to provide occasion for mild friction between the four leading European Governments, illustrated in a remarkable way the conjunction of economic pursuits with political aims which from the first characterized German policy in Turkey and the Middle East. Incidentally it also threw a flood of light upon the foresight, energy, and resource by which the modern German industrialist and financier were revolutionizing the old commercial methods. In Asia Minor, as in some other parts of the world, British enterprise had been first to enter the field, only to slacken effort prematurely and so to tempt younger rivals to reap the rewards of its exertions. The earliest railways there had been built and financed by British companies at a time, in the middle of last century, when the influence of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe was still supreme at the Golden Horn. In 1857, with the assistance of that ambassador, a concession was even obtained for a British company authorizing the construction of a line from the coast opposite Cyprus the entire length of the Euphrates valley. It was estimated that the cost would be from eight to ten

million pounds, and in view of the inadequate subsidies offered by the Turkish Government and of the fact that the British Government promised no financial help at all the project was not proceeded with. Nevertheless, as late as 1871 a Select Committee of the House of Commons reported favourably upon the construction of a line from a port in the Levant to the Persian Gulf, though holding out no hope of its financial success in the absence of a Government guarantee. It has been suggested that in securing Cyprus for Great Britain in 1878 Lord Beaconsfield had in mind the execution of such a project. From that time forward British interest in the commercial development of Asia Minor was no longer maintained at the old level of energy and tenacity, and it was not difficult for the Germans to secure a footing there.

For this eastward pressure of German ambitions and endeavours, however, there had been much diligent preparation. More than half a century before the idea of the future assertion of German influence in Turkey and across the Sea of Marmora had exercised Friedrich List, Wilhelm Roscher, Karl von Rodbertus, and other economists and publicists of great authority in their day. Even the soldier Helmuth von Moltke, later the great strategist, in whom there was a strong vein of imagination, in spite of his hard calling, when visiting Turkey officially in 1841 had speculated upon the creation of a German principality in Palestine. Since then much had been done to establish German influence in Syria and Asia Minor generally, by the introduction of schools, hospitals, and other civilizing agencies, as well as by the more practical enterprise of the engineer, the banker, and the trader. There were also small agricultural colonies of Germans in several parts of the country.

German enterprise was first seriously directed to railway development in Asia Minor in 1888, when the group of financiers named succeeded in obtaining control of the Haidar Pasha-Ismidt line, and also secured a concession for its immediate extension to Angora, a distance of 300 miles, with a conditional right to make further extensions later; and with this concession was given a Government guarantee of interest on a kilometric basis. The responsible promoters of the scheme were the Deutsche Bank and the Württembergische Vereinsbank of Stuttgart, though the concession was assigned to an intermediary. This bold transaction was a direct blow to British

diplomatic and commercial prestige at Constantinople; but the full weight of this blow was only felt later, when, owing to various causes, not the least effective of which was want of foresight and prompt decision on the part of Great Britain, the entire project fell into German hands and was financed by German capitalists. In 1893 a concession was given to the German group for the continuation of the railway to Konia. The British ambassador endeavoured to delay the grant of the concession and have the whole question reopened, upon which the German Government let it be understood that British obstruction in Asia Minor meant German obstruction in Egypt, though German support there had been bought by colonial concessions some years before. With the Konia concession was given a new Government guarantee of interest, to be met somehow by an already impoverished and bankrupt treasury. The extension was completed by 1896, and now the scheme of the Bagdad Railway proper took more definite shape.

In a series of new agreements, culminating in the important convention of March, 1903, the German financial group obtained from the Turkish Government a ninety-nine years' concession for the extension of the existing line from Konia to Bagdad by way of Adana and Mosul, and from Bagdad to Basra, on the Shatt-el-Arab, north of the Persian Gulf, with tributary lines to the Syrian coast at Aleppo and elsewhere, to the Persian frontier at Khanikin, north-east of Bagdad, and to the Gulf at a point to be decided later. The concession also comprised the right to establish ports on the Tigris, at Bagdad, on the Shatt-el-Arab at Basra, and at the Gulf terminus, to navigate the inland waterways, and to work minerals within an area of fifteen miles on either side of the line.

Exploited to its full extent, the concession would have given to Germany unquestioned economic supremacy throughout the most important part of Asiatic Turkey. In obtaining it the railway group unquestionably owed much of its success to boldness, resource, persistence, and readiness to face risks; but it was also greatly assisted by the influence which the Government in Berlin and its diplomatic agents in Constantinople were able and ready to employ in its service, and which was all the more effective owing to the fact that Germany's relations with the Porte had never been clouded by animus against the rigours of Ottoman rule and constant interference in the interests of its

victims. Here Great Britain was at a great disadvantage, for it was the time of her political isolation in Europe. In Egypt she was still struggling against opposition both from Turkey and France; the Boer war had turned almost the entire Continent against her; and there seemed then no promise of the series of international accords which were before long to restore her shaken friendships and rehabilitate her prestige.

When the earlier concessions were obtained, in 1888 and again in 1893, the Governments of Great Britain and of France, though well aware of what was going on, appear to have viewed the Bagdad project with cheerful indifference. Even when in 1903 the promoters of the railway, needing money, invited these two Powers to come in and each subscribe one quarter of the capital, while Germany and the Anatolian Railway Company were together to provide the remainder, they still held back. Now the Russian Government also opposed the scheme, as foreboding aggression in Persia, where she claimed a special position. Public opinion in the three countries whose Governments thus stood aloof seemed to be agreed in the conclusion that the hostility offered to the Bagdad Railway project at that time was either very wise or very foolish, but was unable to decide which. For the present, however, obstruction succeeded, to the annoyance of the German Government, which had been behind the promoters, as it was behind other large industrial and commercial enterprises in which German capital was now being freely invested in the Near East.

It was from the beginning inevitable that Germany's endeavour to assert an economic grip upon Asia Minor would sooner or later bring her into antagonism with Great Britain, which had immemorial interests of an imperial as well as a commercial character in that region. Her earlier railway enterprise there has already been mentioned. Apart from that large stake, however, she had enjoyed special navigation privileges on the Tigris and the Euphrates since the reign of Charles I, while her influence in the Persian Gulf had been paramount for more than a hundred years, insomuch that the buoying and policing of that water had been recognized as her exclusive right. It is not too much to say that the very security of the Gulf and its shores and the prosperity of Lower Mesopotamia had been established under British influence.

Hitherto the British Government in holding aloof from the Bagdad

Railway project had believed itself to be sufficiently protected by its traditional rights and by the knowledge that the increase of the Turkish customs dues, which was believed to be necessary if the guarantee of interest was to be met, could not take effect without its assent. Now, however, that there was no uncertainty as to the character and extent of the power which threatened to pass into the hands of a country which had only recently appeared upon the scene, an attitude of complete inaction was no longer safe or possible. It is evident from words used by the Prime Minister of the day (Mr. Bal four) in the House of Commons (April 8, 1903) that the Government had ceased to attach the old importance to its right of veto upon the customs dues, and that it now entertained no doubt that, whether with or without British co-operation, the great engineering scheme was practicable and would sooner or later be carried out in its full extent. It would also appear that the British Government was now disposed to join in the project, subject to the condition that the entire line from Haidar Pasha to the Gulf should be under some form of international control, securing to Great Britain an equal voice with Germany or any other Power in its administration, and that there should be no interference with the existing political status on the Gulf. If this, however, was the official British opinion, the view still held in political and financial circles generally was that Germany was more dependent upon outside cooperation and good-will than she was willing to admit, and that against British opposition the execution of the scheme in its entirety would prove impracticable.

In the event the conversations on the subject of British participation failed to lead to a definite result, and the German *concessionnaires*, drawing upon their own resources, continued to build the line, though progress was for a long time slow owing to engineering obstacles, financial difficulties both at home and in Turkey, and later the political convulsions incidental to the Young Turkish movement, leading to a merely temporary decline of German influence in Constantinople.

While thus Germany was gradually superseding Great Britain in the esteem of Turkey, that apparent gain was counterbalanced by less doubtful loss elsewhere, for gaining influence with the Sultan meant corresponding estrangement from Russia. Great Britain, too, was not without compensations. For Germany's "new course" in Oriental

politics and her constant concern to identify herself with Austrian interests in the Balkans were, more than any other causes, responsible for that reorientation in the relations of the Powers which changed the position of Great Britain from one of isolation to one of commanding influence.

There is no more remarkable chapter in the history of modern European politics than that which records how at the beginning of the twentieth century Great Britain took the place in the Concert of the Powers which Germany, under Bismarck's guidance, had held for twenty years. The years from 1890 to 1900 may be regarded as the propagandist period of German world-politics, as carried on by the third Emperor, and at the end of that period Germany had unquestionably fewer friends in Europe than at the beginning. Throughout the greater part of that decade England, too, from various causes, suffered from obstinate unpopularity, which during the Boer war took the form in some quarters of unmeasured dislike, yet the end saw most of her enemies willing and waiting to be conciliated, while she herself, having taken stock of her old antipathies, had learned in the school of adversity to place a higher value upon foreign friendships.

It was customary at that time to speak of England's position as, in Lord Salisbury's phrase, one of "splendid isolation." Stolid and impassionate both in its likes and dislikes, taking the joys and bearing the sorrows of its world-wide responsibilities "neither with too great concern," never greatly desiring to have friends, if to have them involved an effort, and in general caring little what the rest of mankind thought or said about it, the British nation almost seemed to have settled down to the belief that its permanent destiny was the loneliness of the great and the misunderstood. The Gladstone and Rosebery Cabinets of 1892-1895 had endeavoured to approach both France and Russia, and it was the knowledge of these advances that caused the German Government to hail with lively satisfaction the return of Lord Salisbury to power in July of the latter year. Great was the surprise felt in Berlin when the new Government showed a disposition to continue in the same path of conciliation.

More than any other British statesman it was Lord Lansdowne, Foreign Secretary during the later years of the Conservative Government of 1895 and again in that of 1902, who succeeded in

persuading his countrymen that it was no virtue in a nation to be without friends, if friends were to be had on acceptable terms, and who directed British policy into new channels. Perhaps prudential considerations more than any serious moral stirring on the subject of the comity of nations convinced the British Government of that day of the unwisdom of an excessive detachment from the rest of Europe. Isolation might be safe for a nation sufficiently strong on land and sea to defy any hostile combination; but England's land forces were hopelessly insufficient, and were never designed, for a struggle with Continental Powers, while her naval power, though still supreme, was being threatened.

In abandoning its old attitude of cold aloofness the British Foreign Office had an invaluable helper in King Edward VII, who from the moment of his accession in January, 1901, devoted himself heart and soul to the cause of international conciliation. The new Sovereign may not have been a man of conspicuous intellectual parts, and books and book-knowledge may have bored him as much as some of his biographers have said; but he had other gifts of greater value in the occupant of a throne – ripe experience and judgment, wide knowledge of the world and of human nature, unfailing tact, and consummate common sense. No man was better fitted to act as his country's unofficial envoy in the service of good-will and peace. The leader of the German National Liberal party, comparing his methods and influence in European politics with those of his nephew, said: "The King of England travels, too, but without talking." That was not quite correct: it was nevertheless true that King Edward spoke in whispers. He visited the more important European Courts, and wherever he went he established new or strengthened old ties, for here the genius for friendship which distinguished him in private life found a perfectly congenial sphere. It would be untrue to say that he initiated the policy of international accords which is commonly associated with his name, but he contributed largely to its success.

But at reciprocal professions of good-will this new spirit in British diplomacy did not stay. The Foreign Office adopted a new *leit-motif* in the idea that a statesmanship worth the name could not be content with the negative duty of warding off the menace of war, but should endeavour to remove the conditions which made such a danger possible. This idea took practical shape in a series of five agreements

concluded with France in 1904, during the Government of Mr. A. J. Balfour, settling points of disagreement between the two countries in various parts of the world. For a long time Great Britain and France had fratched and bickered at each other without having the heart for a downright quarrel. The principal subject of discord was Egypt. In spite of the pacification of that country, England's withdrawal from it had proved impracticable, owing to the magnitude of the task of reconstruction and the hopelessness of raising up a native administration capable of meeting it. On the other hand, France, thrust out of Egypt, was not disposed to abandon the hope of establishing herself higher up the Nile; and it was with this aim in view that M. Hanotaux, while Foreign Minister, sent Colonel Marchand to that region as an "emissary of civilization" on a roving expedition in 1896, though the year before the deliberate warning had been uttered in the British House of Commons (March 28, 1895) that the despatch of a French expedition into the Nile valley would be regarded as an "unfriendly act." On July 10, 1898, a month after the British and French Governments had concluded a general delimitation treaty (June 14th) defining the spheres of influence of the two countries in North Africa, greatly to the advantage of France, who now had a priceless opportunity of consolidating her interests, actual and anticipated, in the North-west, Marchand reached Fashoda, capital of Bar-el-Ghazal, on the Upper Nile, and hoisted the tricolour. Arriving there two months later (September 19th) fresh from the subdual of the Mahdist rebellion at Omdurman and the fall of Khartoum, General Kitchener disputed possession in the name of Great Britain and Egypt. The incident gave rise to strong feeling in France, though danger of actual rupture existed only in the imagination of a frenzied Press. As the result of an exchange of Notes the French Government formally withdrew all claims to territorial advantage in the Soudan, while in March, 1899, a further convention was concluded in amplification of that of the preceding year. Later the name Fashoda was blotted from the map as one of unhappy memories, and the place was henceforth known as Kodok.

M. Delcassé had in the meantime succeeded M. Hanotaux as Foreign Minister, and he retained the confidence of the Chamber in that capacity for the long period of seven years. While M. Hanotaux had leaned towards Germany, M. Delcassé was a warm friend of

England. He is reported to have said in November, 1898, just after his appointment, that he "wished not to leave the Chamber or lay down office until he had established a good understanding (*la bonne entente*) with England." That was undoubtedly one of the leading objects of his foreign policy, and he realized it completely. It was largely owing to his untiring efforts that the long-standing Anglo-French frictions were overcome and the relations between the two countries placed on a cordial footing. Here the tact and affability of King Edward proved invaluable. While still Prince of Wales he had helped to smooth not a few rough places in Anglo-French relationships. Now his first official visit abroad as King was made to the French President, M. Loubet. Delayed by the illness which deferred his coronation more than a year and a half, the visit took place in May, 1903. As a private individual the King had often visited and had greatly endeared himself to Paris. Visiting the city now as a Sovereign, he was enthusiastically welcomed, and all France shared in the satisfaction of the Parisians when once again, for the first time since the fall of the Second Empire, the British Sovereign came to them as an official guest. Two months later the President visited London in return, and there had a flattering reception, while in October the ground for more practical measures of reconciliation was laid by the conclusion of the Anglo-French treaty of arbitration, providing for the submission of disputes of certain kinds to adjudication by the tribunal at The Hague.

Already the two Governments, in the persons of their Foreign Secretaries, Lord Lansdowne and M. Delcassé, had agreed in conferences in London upon the necessity of a comprehensive settlement of all open questions, and active negotiations were now pursued to this end. On April 8th of the following year (1904) agreements were signed in London by Lord Lansdowne and M. Paul Cambon, the French ambassador, settling long-standing disputes regarding the Newfoundland fisheries, Siam, Senegambia, Madagascar, and the New Hebrides, but above all closing the question of Egypt, where France gave England an entirely free hand, while England in return undertook to efface herself in Morocco in the interest of France.

FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1904-1906 - MOROCCO

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BETWEEN THE BERLIN CONGRESS and the beginning of the new century no more disturbing question appeared upon the political horizon of Europe than that of the settlement of Morocco, a country of which Lord Salisbury, with notable prescience, said in 1891, while Prime Minister, that it was destined to be "as great a trouble to Europe" and to "carry with it as great a menace to the peace of Europe as the other Mohammedan countries further to the East twenty or thirty years ago." It seems desirable to detach this question, made acute by the Anglo-French convention of April, 1904, from the general survey of foreign politics at this point, since to view it merely as one episode amongst others, with most of which it had little direct connection, might involve the danger of a wrong perspective, leading either to the exaggeration or, more probably, the minimizing of its true proportions.

The full significance of the provisions of the convention relating to Morocco cannot be appreciated unless antecedent facts are borne in mind. For half a century the policy of Great Britain in regard to that country had followed the principles laid down by Lord Palmerston. "How could we," wrote that statesman to Lord Clarendon on March 1, 1857, "combine to be unprovoked aggressors – to imitate in Africa the partition of Poland by *the conquest of Morocco for France,* of Tunis or some other State for Sardinia, and of Egypt for England? And more especially, how could England and France, who have guaranteed the integrity of the Turkish Empire, turn round and wrest Egypt from the Sultan? A coalition for such a purpose would revolt the moral feelings of mankind, and would certainly be fatal to any English Government that was a party to it. Then as to the balance of power to be maintained by giving us Egypt. In the first place we don't want Egypt . . . and its possession would not, as a political, military and naval question, be considered in this country as a set-off against the possession of Morocco by France. Let us try to improve all these countries by the general influence of our commerce, but let us all abstain from a crusade of conquest which would call down upon us the condemnation of all the other civilized countries."

These characteristically dogmatic utterances were strictly in keeping with British policy ever since Nelson's declaration that Tangier must either remain in the hands of Morocco or pass into those of England. Two years after Palmerston thus wrote the British

Government refused to allow Spain to occupy that greatly coveted port. During the succeeding four decades the main objects of British diplomacy in Morocco had been to confirm its independence and particularly to ward off menace from France. In the meantime not only Great Britain but the European Powers generally had ceased to be squeamish on the subject of territorial rights where undeveloped countries were deemed to obstruct the path of progress, and above all the free advance of trade. Nevertheless, as late as 1889, Lord Salisbury, as British Prime Minister, had formulated the attitude of his Government touching the status in the Mediterranean in the words:

"Our treaty obligations are matters of public property. . . . Our policy with respect to Europe and the shores of the Mediterranean has been avowed again and again to be a policy of peace, of maintaining things as they are. . . . If there is any particular change which I might indicate as, in our judgment, more pernicious than another, it is a change which would increase the territories of any of the Great Powers of Europe, because such a change would have the infallible effect of raising dread and apprehension and jealousy in other Powers, and of precipitating us into a catastrophe which we are all anxious to avoid."

Morocco had for a long time been a source of growing anxiety and contention to European diplomacy, but its independence had never hitherto been seriously threatened. When in 1880 eleven States, including the United States, concluded with the Moorish Government the Convention of Madrid (July 3rd), conferring upon all the signatory Powers increased trading facilities and the right of most-favoured-nation treatment, and so made the affairs of Morocco for the first time an international concern, they negotiated with it as the Government of a sovereign State. Later commercial treaties with the country, like the earlier ones, similarly proceeded from that presupposition. Moreover, if any Powers were more than others under a moral pledge to respect the *status quo,* those Powers were France, Great Britain, and Spain. On the other hand, the Power which next to Great Britain had in the past shown the greatest desire to work harmoniously with the rest of Europe in all dealings with an empire whose ruler responded unwillingly to outside influences was Germany. Ten years after the Madrid Convention had paved the way for freer mercantile relations with Morocco, Germany concluded a special commercial treaty with

the Sultan (June 1, 1890), but before allowing it to be ratified she submitted it to the judgment of the other Powers.

The same attitude, cautious towards Morocco and considerate towards the Powers, was held by the British Government when two years later it despatched to the Moorish Court a special mission, under Colonel Sir Charles Euan-Smith, with a view to the conclusion of an improved commercial treaty. Special care was taken on that occasion to prevent any suspicion that the mission had a political purpose. The instructions issued to the envoy extraordinary set forth that "it has been the constant aim of her Majesty's Government and of your predecessors at Tangier to preserve the independence and territorial integrity of the empire of Morocco, while neglecting no opportunity of impressing upon the Sultan and his Ministers the importance and advantage of improving the government and administration of the country," and he was bidden to act faithfully in the spirit of that tradition.

When later the military head of the mission was eager to be authorized, in the event of difficulties arising with the Sultan, to "hold language to his Majesty of a character more vigorous than that of mere remonstrance and disappointment," such permission was promptly refused, Lord Salisbury directing him to abstain from any action which might give colour to the idea that Great Britain wished to employ menace or to assume the protection of the country. Before the draft treaty was presented to the Sultan it was submitted to the principal Powers, in proof that Great Britain sought for herself no special privileges. The Governments of Austria-Hungary, Germany, Italy, and Spain approved of its provisions; only the Government of France withheld assent.

The mission set out amid imposing circumstance, and after remaining three months in the country obtained the acceptance of a treaty which fell far short of the proposals at first put forward. When, however, it came to the signing of the agreement the Sultan drew back. The treaty had been pressed upon him as the most efficacious means of protecting himself against territorial aggrandizement by covetous Powers, and there was no concealment of the fact that French hostility prevented its ratification and no doubt as to the reason for this hostility.

For some years after this French influence was pressed on Morocco

with growing insistence, and in the same degree British efforts to maintain the Sultan's authority and independence increased, with the result that at the beginning of the new century Great Britain, and not France, was in special favour at the Shereefian Court. A clear suggestion of how France intended that events should be shaped was conveyed in a letter written on July 27, 1901, by the French Foreign Minister, M. Delcassé, to the French envoy at Tangier, wherein he said that France could be, in Bismarckian phrase, either "a good friend or a good enemy," just as the Moorish Government wished, yet still instructing him to assure the Sultan that it was her wish to uphold his independence and to preserve him from danger. Asked in June, 1901, by the German ambassador in Paris whether there was any truth in the report that France designed a protectorate, M. Delcassé replied: "If by the word 'protectorate' it is implied that France, as the mistress of Algeria and Tunis, has and should preserve in Morocco an entirely special position, it seems to me self-evident." Of a protectorate so innocently defined the ambassador remarked that "nothing could be more proper."

Nevertheless, in the same year the French Government made proposals to Spain, the Sagasta Cabinet being in power, for the partition of the country, of which Spain was to have the Mediterranean littoral with a stretch of *hinterland,* comprising Fez and Tuza, and France the remainder. After the negotiations had dragged on until the end of the following year, without reaching an issue, Sagasta resigned, and his successor, Señor Silvela, declined to proceed further along a path which he perceived to be beset with manifold dangers. His avowed reason for renouncing the agreement was that in it and all the negotiations relating to it Great Britain had been entirely ignored. Little more than a year passed before the negotiations which had broken down in Madrid were reopened in London, leading to the agreement of April 4, 1904.

In so far as it related to Morocco this agreement was divided into a public and a secret section. The public agreement, which was called by the less suggestive name "Declaration," affirmed that the French Government had no intention of altering the political status of Morocco, though it contained no definite undertaking that an alteration should not take place, and certain of the provisions clearly anticipated that contingency. The British Government, on the other

hand, recognized that "it appertains to France, particularly as a Power whose dominions are coterminous for a great distance with those of Morocco, to preserve order in that country and to provide assistance for the purpose of all administrative, economic, financial, and military reforms which it may require," and declared that it would "not obstruct the action taken by France for this purpose, provided that such action shall leave intact the rights which Great Britain, in virtue of treaties, conventions, and usage, enjoys in Morocco."

The two Governments also agreed to maintain in Morocco and Egypt respectively, at first for a period of thirty years, the principles of commercial equality and equal taxation as between the different nationals. In order to secure "the free passage of the Straits of Gibraltar" they undertook "not to permit the erection of any fortifications or strategic works on that portion of the coast of Morocco comprised between, but not including, Melilla and the heights which command the right bank of the river Sebou"; but this condition was not to apply to the places already in the occupation of Spain on the Moorish coast of the Mediterranean, of which Melilla was one.

Nothing was said specifically as to the rights of other countries, except in the case of Spain, whose special interests the signatory Powers recognized, on which account the agreement provided that France and Spain should come to an understanding on the subject, duly communicating its terms to the British Government.

Finally – a momentous provision, as it was to prove – the contracting Governments agreed to "afford to one another their diplomatic support in order to obtain the execution" of the agreement.

More important than the Declaration, however, were the five secret articles which were attached to it and which were not made public until November, 1911, and then, in the first instance, by a Paris newspaper. One of these secret articles was intended to safeguard the engagements specified in the general agreement in the event of the French Government finding itself constrained, by the force of circumstances, to modify its policy in respect to Morocco. Another stipulated that the Mediterranean coastline of Morocco, with a tract of the *hinterland,* should come within the Spanish sphere of influence "whenever the Sultan ceases to exercise authority over it"; that Spain should not alienate the whole or any part of such territory to another

Power; and that her acquisition of the territory should be conditional upon her acceptance of the articles of the Declaration relating to the maintenance in Morocco of economic parity and the prohibition of new coastal fortifications.

In the following October the French and Spanish Governments supplemented these agreements by a public Declaration and an accompanying secret convention of sixteen articles. The Declaration affirmed their attachment to "the integrity of the Moorish empire under the sovereignty of the Sultan," while the secret convention contained elaborate provisions for the future partition of that empire and the conditions under which such partition should take effect. A special sphere of influence was assigned to Spain, and within it she was freely to exercise her right of action "in case the continuance of the political status of Morocco and of the Shereefian Government should become impossible, or if, owing to the weakness of that Government and to its continued inability to uphold law and order, or to any other cause, the existence of which is acknowledged by both parties, the *status quo* can no longer be maintained." These secret engagements likewise came to full light only seven years later, and in the same circumstances as those of earlier date. The two agreements formed in effect a single comprehensive transaction. Stripped of their merely formal reservations, they amounted to a claim by Great Britain and France to dispose of Morocco without regard to any other States save one, though most of the European Powers and also the United States possessed treaty rights in the country. Great Britain, it is true, did not expressly hand over to France the sovereignty of Morocco, for to do that was not within her power, but she put France in the way of obtaining it and undertook to give to her diplomatic support in any measures which she might take to that end. France thus came appreciably nearer to the realization of a project of which nearly half a century before (1857) Lord Palmerston wrote as "the secret aim of Louis Philippe," and as "one of the plans deposited for use, as occasion may offer, in the archives of the French Government."

For Great Britain the agreement of April, 1904, was, of course, an entire and abrupt reversal of the policy regarding Morocco which had been enunciated by Palmerston, hitherto accepted by all succeeding British Governments and statesmen, and loyally supported by the British diplomatic representatives accredited to the Moorish Court,

and notably by Sir John Drummond Hay. By the agreement Morocco was still to remain independent; *de facto* it was to pass under the control of France on conditions which provided for that control leading eventually to occupation and annexation. Yet the essential fact to be emphasized at this stage, and to be remembered at all later stages by those who impartially seek the truth of this sorely entangled episode, is that neither Great Britain nor France had any proprietary rights whatever, actual or contingent, in Morocco, and strictly speaking had no business to discuss, still less to dispose of, the future of the sultanate at all.

A quarter-century before Lord Salisbury, when British Foreign Secretary, had refused to do for France in regard to Tunis what Great Britain now proposed to do for her in regard to Morocco. "If France occupied Tunis to-morrow we should not even remonstrate," he wrote to Lord Lyons on July 20, 1878, parrying inopportune pressure from the French Government on the point; yet he took care to add, "but to promise that publicly would be a little difficult, because we must avoid giving away other people's property without their consent, and also because it is no business of ours to pronounce beforehand on the considerations which Italy would probably advance upon that subject." Great Britain, in fact, opposed French claims to Tunis to the end, and when they were pressed to the point of annexation offered the only resistance still possible in the circumstances – a vigorous and honest protest.

Let Morocco be substituted for Tunis and Germany for Italy, and the position was the same in 1904 as in 1878, except that where twenty-six years before Great Britain asserted, and for some time succeeded in preserving, the rights of an independent North African State menaced by France, she was now prepared to help France to acquire rights of a precisely similar kind in return for corresponding advantages. Many things had, of course, changed in the relations of these and other Powers in the interval, and it would be absurd to pretend that in foreign politics the precept and practice of one Government can be binding upon succeeding Governments for all time. Inasmuch, however, as Germany later reproached Great Britain for having abandoned her traditional attitude towards Morocco, in holding which Germany had been her warmest supporter, it is the more important to visualize the question as it appeared to the

Government and public opinion of that country.

Nevertheless, it cannot be said that the agreement, so far as it was divulged at the time, created great surprise, for the conditions in Morocco had for some time been intolerable. Growing friction with France had resulted from the inability of the Sultan, Abdul Aziz, to preserve order in his own household. There were local rebellions, frequent raids by Moorish tribes on the Algerian frontier, and occasionally French convoys were attacked and captured. Events of this kind kept large parts of the country in unrest, and acted in restraint of legitimate commercial intercourse. France had repeatedly co-operated in suppressing frontier disturbances, but in May, 1903, the position was so unsatisfactory that Abdul Aziz formally appealed to her for help in the establishment of his authority, and this help was duly given. In this way France had steadily increased her influence and strengthened her claim to a special position in the country. If a spirit of aggression drove her forward, as it undoubtedly did, it must be frankly admitted that she was also urged into action by circumstances which were only in a partial degree within her control.

Before 1904, therefore, the diplomatic world of Europe knew how events were moving, and it is not likely that to this world the Anglo-French agreements came as a shock. In Germany, more than in any other country, recent French action in Morocco had been followed with suspicion. In March, 1904, the French ambassador in Berlin, M. Bihourd, reported to Paris that the Pan-Germans were restive and, at a congress held in Würtemberg, had called on the Government to claim for Germany a special sphere of influence in West Morocco, to comprise the ports of Qualidia and Agadir, in case the *status* quo should be disturbed. Later in the same month Prince Radolin, the German ambassador in Paris, privately asked the French Foreign Minister whether it was true that an agreement with Great Britain had been, or was on the point of being, signed, whereupon M. Delcassé replied that while there had been negotiations for a long time and a positive understanding was probable, “nothing had been signed or was on the point of being signed.” The Anglo-French Declaration was, in fact, signed and sealed only eleven days later.

The reception of the agreement in Great Britain was a mixed one; but perhaps in the minds of most people the complete reconciliation with France, of which it was held to be a token, overshadowed for the

moment all other considerations. In so far as the agreement purported to be a business transaction, there was a disposition to judge it unfavourably and to conclude that the Government had been outwitted. An earlier Foreign Secretary, Lord Rosebery, asserted at the time that "no more one-sided agreement was ever concluded between two Powers at peace with each other." Viewing this agreement alone, and independently of the other territorial settlements to which it belonged, this was strictly true; for while France merely recognized a British tenure in Egypt which existed de facto already, and could no longer be shaken, Great Britain conceded to France a status in Morocco which she had not hitherto held or claimed. This was the view generally taken in France, where the *Journal des Débats* claimed that "France has only conceded rights which were without value save for the purpose of hindering and annoying the British; while the latter Power has granted most important concessions of real and practical value."

France had, in fact, received far more than she had ever hoped for. Long as her eyes had been turned to Morocco, her responsible statesmen had recognized that if ever French influence were to be established in the country it must be subject to important limitations, of which those most readily accepted were the integrity of the sultanate, the maintenance of the sovereignty of the Shereefs, the guarantee of complete commercial freedom, and, not least, the neutralization of Tangier. Not only so, but there is reason to believe that France, remembering the bad blood which had been created by the Tunis episode, would only have been too glad to receive permission to enter Morocco at the hands of the Powers collectively, as their mandatary, which would have meant on their conditions.

If, however, the Morocco convention appeared to show France as the better bargainer, the series of Anglo-French territorial agreements as a whole conferred upon Great Britain very substantial advantages. Irritating disputes of long standing in other parts of the world, not least embarrassing that relating to the Newfoundland fisheries, were finally adjusted, and – a political gain of the utmost value – the wound to French national pride which had been caused by the Fashoda episode was now healed. Even in Morocco Great Britain induced France to forgo claim to any part of the Mediterranean littoral, so renouncing the hope of obtaining an outlook upon the Straits of

Gibraltar, though she was to be cut off from the Atlantic only in the extreme north.

Lord Rosebery called attention to a more serious aspect of the Morocco agreement when he said that it committed Great Britain to "the unwritten liabilities of the Continental system," therein speaking more truly than he knew at the time. Many other leaders of political opinion in Great Britain, almost exclusively on the Liberal side, entertained the same misgiving, and already detected in the agreement an implied pledge of obligations of indefinite extent. Nevertheless, whether opposed or not to the apparent reversal of England's traditional policy, described by Canning as "revolving in her own orbit," all parties were alike relieved that an *entente* with France had been established. One of the immediate results of this *entente* was that France, relying upon British friendship for the security of her northern coast, transferred her Channel fleet to the Mediterranean, while Great Britain was able to release vessels in the Mediterranean for future service in the North Sea and Scandinavian waters.

While the British Government communicated to the Powers directly concerned that part of the agreement which related to Egypt, the Morocco stipulations were not similarly communicated either by that Government or the French, though a general statement on the subject was made to the German ambassador in Paris and, through the French ambassador in Berlin, to the German Foreign Secretary. Relying upon French pledges, the German Government appears to have anticipated the conclusion of the agreement without anxiety. The Ministerial journal, the *North German Gazette*, reflected this attitude when it stated (March 26th): "In view of the repeated assurances officially given by France that she has no thought of conquest or occupation, but simply aims at opening North-west Africa to European civilization, there is no reason to believe that German commercial interests in Morocco are in danger." At the end of the month M. Delcassé again assured the German ambassador in Paris that France wished to "uphold in Morocco the existing political and territorial status," adding that "that status, if it is to last, must obviously be reinforced (soutenu) and improved " – a reservation far more likely to remove than to arouse suspicion. While, however, it seems clear that in the various communications which were made by the French Government to the German Foreign Office through the recognized

diplomatic media in Paris and Berlin only the purport of the public Declaration was disclosed, it is probable that the existence and even the general terms of the secret articles soon became known in that quarter. In a letter addressed to the French diplomatic representatives abroad (April 12th), notifying the conclusion of the five Anglo-French agreements, M. Delcassé said in regard to Morocco that it was "necessary to know whose influence should preponderate" in the country, and he again used the words, "The present state of things can only last on condition of its being reinforced and improved." He added that it was the duty of France to show herself "the best friend of Morocco because most interested in her prosperity," and that her civilizing mission there could be carried out "*sans léser les droits acquis de personne.*" This letter likewise contained no reference to the secret articles.

It follows that in the spring of 1904 not only Europe at large but the nations directly affected were compelled to judge of the significance of the Anglo-French entente upon incomplete evidence.

The secret articles of both treaties have been defended on the plea that to have affirmed the integrity of the Sultan's empire and at the same time made known the arrangements for dividing it, in the event of its government proving incapable of reform, would simply have precipitated the end of Moorish rule. On the contrary, unless ultimate annexation was deliberately contemplated – a question which only France was in a position to answer – it would have been at least a negative merit to have made these provisions public, for to have done so would have given to the Sultan and his unruly people a fair warning in advance that the watchful eyes of the two neighbouring Powers were upon them, and that unless they mended their ways these Powers were prepared and determined to give to their country order and good government in spite of themselves. To hold in reserve, in the dark, the weapon of partition and annexation may have been considerate to the Sul tan's feelings, but it was distinctly menacing to his independence. Nowhere was the resentment caused by the later disclosure of the secret commitments greater than in France.

Although knowing as yet but little of the meaning of the Anglo-French agreement, German opinion nevertheless at once became nervous over the sudden reconciliation of two Powers whose hostility had been regarded as part of the ordained order of things; but it is

important to note, in view of later events, that the Chancellor, Count von Bülow, professed to welcome it as "natural and inoffensive." He regarded it as a sensible attempt on the part of the two Powers to settle their colonial disputes amicably, as Germany and England had done already, and of the treaty he said in the Diet (April 14, 1904): "From the standpoint of German interests we have no objection to raise to it. For a strained relationship between the two nations would be a menace to the peace of the world, the maintenance of which we sincerely desire." He added: "As to Morocco, which constitutes the essential part of the agreement, we are interested in that country, as elsewhere in the Mediterranean, principally from the economic standpoint. Our interests there are, above all, commercial, so that we have an important interest in the maintenance of tranquillity and order. It is our duty to protect our mercantile interests in Morocco, and we shall protect them, but we have no reason to fear that they will be ignored or injured by any Power whatsoever."

Bülow had told a representative of the Paris *Figaro* in May, 1902.: "Our (German) interests in Morocco are less than in China. To speak frankly, I do not look upon this question as one likely so very soon to occupy our diplomacy. We have no bay-window frontage on the Mediterranean. In Morocco, as in China, we want peace as the sole condition of our economic expansion." He appears to have been still of the same mind. Rejecting a suggestion that Germany should at once protest against the agreement, he said:

"It has been stated that this agreement, and particularly that part referring to Morocco, has been received in Germany with shame and dejection. The (previous) speaker maintained that we suffer other Powers to assume for themselves a greater influence in Morocco than we have. That could only have one meaning, namely, that we demanded a portion of Morocco for ourselves. But if a great Empire like the German Empire makes a demand, it must carry it through, *coûte que coûte.* Now, what would he advise if such a demand were to meet with opposition? Should I have to draw the sword? I believe that just at present, the moment when a war is raging in the Far East, the consequences of which are still incalculable, and when much is still unsettled in the Near East, a policy of sobriety, calmness, and reserve is most useful for us in the interests of the Empire, and I will not allow any foreign or any malicious or impatient home criticism to dictate to

me the moment when we shall abandon our present reserve."

This declaration, in spite of the cryptic and presumably well-considered words with which it closed, was generally received in Germany as an explicit renunciation of direct political interest in Morocco, and was a rude shock to the party which represented *Weltpolitik* in the Diet.

Meanwhile, the British Government was careful to explain, in perfect good faith, that friendship with France did not mean hostility to any other country. It was not the fault of British statesmen, therefore, that in France the *entente* was immediately and widely regarded as formally identifying Great Britain with the French attitude towards Germany, and as a second valuable policy of insurance against isolation in the West in the event of the antagonists of 1870 again coming to blows. In spite of Ministerial assurances, however, a large section of thoughtful English opinion feared even then that this might sooner or later be the effect of the indefinite liability which their country had undertaken.

Official relations between Berlin and London continued for the present unchanged. In the following June King Edward visited the Emperor at Kiel, and a month later a treaty of arbitration, of more value than many official protestations of good-will, was signed by the two Governments. Germans in general, however, had become restless and irritable, and in the winter months of 1904 one of those unaccountable scares to which emotional nations are liable took possession of them. It was caused by the circulation of wild reports to the effect that England contemplated a sudden naval descent upon Germany's coasts and the destruction, if not of her seaports, at least of her fleet. An English naval newspaper had just before published an article urging the Government to lay down a limit beyond which the German navy should not be allowed to increase on pain of challenge, and this article, to which official authority was ignorantly attributed, was quoted by the agents of the Navy League throughout Germany as a proof of nefarious design. The action of the British Admiralty in assigning part of the Channel fleet for service in the North Sea had also had a disquieting effect. The scare died a natural death, though it filled the coffers of the German Navy League and gave Chauvinist politicians and newspapers an excuse for much acrimonious polemic.

Immediately after the publication of the first Morocco agreement

the French Minister at Tangier reported (April 24th) that its objects were being exaggerated at the Sultan's Court, and that attempts were being made to stir up feeling against France because of it. M. Delcassé thereupon instructed him to assure the Moorish Government that "far from diminishing the Sultan's authority, we are engaged in reviving his prestige"; but the assurance did not dispel alarm. Great Britain having forsaken her traditional *rôle* as warden of the Moorish kingdom, and disclaimed further responsibility for its independence, and France having ostentatiously proclaimed the policy of political penetration, with a scheme of partition hidden in the background, Morocco now turned to Germany for protection, and that protection Germany was only too ready to offer.

The French ambassador in Berlin had already warned his Government (April 21st) that while the German Chancellor seemed satisfied with the terms of the agreement, as far as they were known, the Emperor was likely on his return from abroad to favour intervention with a view to placing Germany on the same footing as Great Britain in regard to future commercial dealings with Morocco. With a fuller knowledge of the facts, Bülow also began to change his ground. The reconciliation of Great Britain and France was one thing, but the agreement which affirmed it was another, and he began to distinguish between the two. Now he came to the conclusion that in proposing to plan out the future of Morocco the two Powers had gone beyond their rights, and that in any event Germany should have been consulted before they sealed their friendship by an agreement to dispose of the affairs of a neutral country in which she had old treaty interests. The more the agreement was studied, the plainer it appeared that the scouting of Germany had been deliberate. Spain, who already occupied a number of positions on the Moroccan coast, had been bought off by a provision to the effect that if at some future time the country should be partitioned she should have a further share. The assent of Italy had been secured by assurances, independent of the agreement, of French support in the event of her appropriating Tripoli. Thus of the Powers specially interested in the trade of Morocco, Germany, whose share in that trade exceeded the shares of Spain and Italy combined, though it fell far below that of either Great Britain or France, was the only one to be ignored.

For Germans this reflection was the more galling when it was

recalled how loyally their Government had supported successive British Governments in their opposition to the endeavours of France to assert a predominant influence in the country, and how only a few years before a British Colonial Secretary, Mr. Chamberlain, had vaguely suggested the partition of Morocco on a method which would have given to Germany a seaport and a sphere of influence on the Atlantic coast. Both before and after that proposal the colonial party had confidently counted on Germany receiving a share of the sultanate in the event of France forcing its dissolution, and much Pan-Germanist literature had been devoted to the subject. England, it is true, now stood aside, but she could well afford to do so, since she had renounced her interest in Morocco in return for valuable considerations elsewhere.

All the jealousies and rancours created by the first colonial disputes of 1884 and 1885 were suddenly revived in Germany. Great Britain was represented as resuming her old *rôle* as the determined obstructor of German imperialistic ambitions. Thirty years before she had set up the doctrine that territory which she had not occupied Germany could not be allowed to claim; now the same doctrine was advanced, but in the interest of Germany's enemy, France.

Looking back upon events which have now entered into other relations, and have no longer a separate significance, the fact which stands out most prominently in the story of the first settlement of Morocco is that a grave mistake was committed by the French and British Governments in ignoring Germany so deliberately in a matter in which she had a legitimate claim, in virtue of treaty rights and commercial interests, to be consulted. There are probably few people familiar with the history of the Morocco dispute who do not now agree that a perfectly straightforward arrangement open to the whole world, concluded either by France, Spain, Great Britain, and Germany, or by the whole of the States interested in the Madrid Convention, might have prevented much misunderstanding and aggravation, while securing to France the preferential position in the country which she claimed. If nothing else should have put the British Government in particular on its guard, before lending itself to a clandestine and one-sided arrangement of the kind, it was the recollection of the untoward fate of the Anglo-Portuguese treaty of February, 1884, which was similarly concluded in the dark and with the same disregard for

German and other collateral interests, and was no sooner made known than it had to be repudiated.

The importance of Germany's material stake in Morocco was indisputable. German travellers had taken a large and creditable part in the earlier exploration of the country; there were two German Residents, at Fez and Tangier, one established since 1873, and a Moorish envoy was accredited to the German Imperial Court; there were German consuls at the more important seaports; much German capital had been sunk in engineering, industrial, and mining enterprises, and German traders were to be found wherever trade was to be done; there were German banks in several centres; and German steamship lines plied regularly between the two countries. France, at least, could not plead ignorance of these facts. Only a short time before M. Méline, an ex-Premier, had written of Germany's relations to Morocco: "Her commerce is always increasing; there are nearly fifty German firms on the coast, German medical men at Mogador and Casablanca, German consuls everywhere, and even meteorological stations have been established on the coast, supported by the German Government." To have ignored the claims of so sensitive a rival was in the circumstances an inexcusable miscalculation. It is highly probable, of course, that Germany, if brought into the agreement, would have demanded compensation, but so had the other Powers concerned, and moreover the compensation which was not offered to her in the beginning had to be given under pressure at a later date, when it earned no more gratitude than it deserved.

What was now plain to Germany was that France, with British assistance, was bent upon asserting in Morocco as complete an influence as in Tunis, with a view to the one country like the other eventually going the way of Algeria and becoming a French province, with the result, sooner or later, of that embargo upon foreign trade which was a feature of French colonial policy. Already there were indications in Paris of a desire to accelerate that process. In June, 1904, a Committee for Morocco, consisting of influential parliamentarians and colonial politicians, among them Prince A. d'Arenberg, MM. Étienne, Chaillez Bert, Charles Roux, de Vogué, and René Millet, was formed for promoting the "peaceful absorption" of the sultanate. The programme of the Committee proposed that the French Government should offer to Morocco its influence with a view

to the preservation of order and good government, and should lend the money needed for internal development; but it was not yet to resort to active interference, and no French officials were to be sent to the country. On the other hand, a separate group in the Chamber of Deputies was even then working for the proclamation of a formal protectorate.

It may be said that the force of Germany's objections was weakened by the fact that under Bismarck's influence the German delegates at the Madrid conference of 1880 had been foremost to support French pretensions, holding that, as was stated by the Foreign Secretary in the Diet later (November 17, 1911), "it could only be desirable for Germany were France to establish herself as firmly as possible" in Morocco. Such moral support of France, however, was not equivalent to a formal act of State, but was rather analogous to the advice to take Tunis which was given by Bismarck and Lord Salisbury to France in 1878; and it had never been translated into an agreement of any kind. Moreover, in changing her ground Germany had only followed the example of Great Britain: of the three Powers chiefly interested France alone had from the first followed a consistent, undeviating course. On the other hand, Germany was able to appeal to rights secured to her by two treaties, the Treaty of Madrid of 1880, securing to all the signatory Powers most-favoured-nation treatment, and her own treaty of 1890 with Morocco, which, among other things, confirmed this right to her. Weighing all these considerations, the German Government now determined that if existing treaties were to be put aside and France allowed to assume a dominant position in the sultanate, it must be by the common assent of all the Powers with which the Moorish Government was in treaty relationship. There is no evidence to show that in deciding upon a policy of intervention at this time official Germany desired to obtain a territorial foothold in Morocco, though this was the aim of the Pan-Germanists.

Before the end of the year 1904 the German Minister at Tangier warned his Government that events were marching fast there, and that if Germany had any intention to make a practical protest against French aggression there was no time to lose. Early in the new year (February 21st) the French Minister served on the Sultan at Fez a scheme of reforms, relating to administration, justice, police, customs, and the construction of roads and other public works, with the offer of

financial and administrative assistance. It was now that the first official notification was sent from Berlin to Paris that the German Government could not regard itself as bound by agreements to which it was in no way a party. Nevertheless, Büllow informed the Diet on March 29th that all Germany still asked and all she wanted was "the maintenance of the open door," and "the equal treatment of all trading nations." "So far as an attempt is being made to alter the international status of Morocco, or to restrict the economic development of the country," he said, "we must see more closely than before that our economic interests are not endangered. Our first step, therefore, is to put ourselves into communication with the Sultan."

On Bülow's recommendation, as was later admitted, the Emperor himself undertook to be the medium of this communication – a task peculiarly sympathetic to a histrionic temperament, and on the last day of the month he landed in Tangier. Welcomed there by the German merchants, he spoke to them of the importance of Germany's commercial interests in the country, and promised to protect them and to secure for all the Powers complete equality of treatment, an object which was "only possible on condition of the sovereignty of the Sultan and the independence of the country, both of which are for Germany open to no question at all. I am therefore ready to answer for that at all times." "I believe," he added, "that my visit to Tangier proclaims this explicitly and clearly, and will call forth the conviction that what Germany does in Morocco will be arranged exclusively with the Sultan." Receiving later the representatives of the Sultan, the Emperor assured them that he regarded the Sultan as an independent ruler and looked forward to the maintenance of Morocco as a free land open to the peaceful competition of all nations without monopolies or preferences. Two months later a diplomatic mission was sent to Fez in order further to assure the Sultan that Germany was on his side.

Whether the visit to Tangier was deliberately designed as a rebuff for the entente Powers or not, it was obviously intended to serve as a reminder that the imperial envoy's warning of July 3, 1900, that "Neither on the ocean nor across it can any great decision be taken without Germany and the German Emperor," still held good. In thus tardily taking up an attitude of obstruction, Germany did not up to this point claim rights in Morocco superior or antecedent to those possessed by the other treaty States, but demanded the observance of

the *status quo* simply as one State acting, though without mandate, in the interest of all. Bülow had still not departed from the position which he held in April, 1904, when urged by the colonial party to make Germany's assent to the Anglo-French treaty dependent upon a cession of Moroccan territory. He claimed that the Emperor had only encouraged the Sultan to insist upon remaining, as the treaty of 1904 declared that he was intended to remain, the independent ruler of an independent country. The worst to be said against Germany's intervention so late in the day is that it was inconvenient, inopportune, and irritating to France, though perhaps not more so than it was intended to be. Yet of this the treaty Powers of 1904 had no right to complain. They had not consulted Germany when they disposed of Morocco; and if it would have been more candid had her Government objected to the agreement at an earlier date, it could at least contend that no candour had been shown on the other side. A year before Bülow had said, when reproached by his critics for quiescence, that there was a time for action and a time for reserve. On that occasion he saw no reason for committing himself to a definite decision, but now he no longer saw any reason for deferring it.

In a despatch addressed to the German embassies abroad on April 12th, Bülow formally justified his Government's changed attitude. Recalling the Anglo-French Declaration of a year before, he said:

"The German Government took no action, seeing that the Anglo-French arrangement postulates the *status quo*, and that consequently we thought ourselves entitled to suppose that the Powers interested in the Madrid Convention (of 1880) would be consulted by France in case she had in view in Morocco innovations tending to circumscribe the rights and liberties of the other signatory Powers of the convention in their extent or in their duration. We perceived, however, that that opinion was erroneous, and that the time had come to think of the protection of German interests, when the Morocco Government inquired if it were true that the Minister of France at Fez was, as he professed, the mandatary of the European Powers, and it became known that different features in the French alleged programme of reforms were inconsistent with the maintenance of the status quo."

In the meantime the Emperor had attempted a daring stroke of secret diplomacy on his own account in another quarter. During the

early months of the Russo-Japanese war, which began in February, 1904, the British Government had raised objections to the coaling of Russian ships of war in the Baltic by Germany as being a breach of neutrality, which, if persisted in, might bring that country into the war, and therewith Great Britain as Japan's ally. Russia resented this protest, and the relations between London and St. Petersburg became for a short time further strained when on the night of October 21st some vessels in Admiral Rozhdestvensky's fleet, in crossing the Dogger Bank, fired upon some Hull fishing smacks, honestly, though irrationally, mistaking them for enemy torpedo boats. The Emperor deemed the moment propitious for pressing upon the Czar a treaty the object of which was to detach France from the entente with Great Britain and confront the latter Power by a new Triple Alliance. "In this way," he wrote (October 27, 1904), "a powerful combination of the three strongest Continental Powers would be formed, to attack which the Anglo-Saxon group would think twice before acting." The Czar at first welcomed the proposal, and accordingly a draft was drawn up and sent to him. Then he hesitated to affix his signature until the French Government had been informed. The Emperor, however, insisted upon secrecy. "It is my firm conviction," he telegraphed to the Czar on November 26th, "that it would be absolutely dangerous to inform France before we have both signed the treaty. It would have an effect diametrically opposed to our wishes."

Whatever may have been the exact purport of the treaty, it is admitted to have been directly aimed against Great Britain and to have been duly signed by the two Sovereigns, in the form proposed by the Emperor, at Björkö on July 24th following. It is also clear that the Czar, realizing on reflection that he had committed himself to an engagement which France, as the informal ally of Great Britain and the unconciliated rival of Germany, would be bound to repudiate, later endeavoured to retract his word. That act explains the Emperor's warm reminder of September 29th: "We joined hands and signed before God, who heard our vows. I therefore think that the treaty can well come into existence. What is signed is signed. God is our testator."

The treaty, nevertheless, remained a dead letter. That knowledge of these surreptitious German overtures to Russia reached the British Foreign Office through Paris need not be doubted, and it cannot have

been without an important and justifiable influence upon its action in deciding to give to France vigorous and undivided support in the later developments of the Moroccan controversy.

Fortified by the Emperor's assurances, the Sultan of Morocco rejected overtures from France which would have given to that Power a practical ascendancy in a country in which hitherto she had neither possessed nor claimed peculiar rights; and at Germany's instigation he proposed that a conference of the Powers which were represented at Madrid in 1880 should be convened to consider certain reforms which he wished to introduce and the manner of doing it. So long as he had the Cabinet behind him Delcassé resolutely stood out against this proposal, apprehensive that by taking part France would find herself opposed by Germany on every point. Germany, with equal tenacity, supported the Sultan, and warned the French Government (June 10th): "The alternative is the *status quo*, and it is necessary that you should know that we are behind Morocco." That was a clear hint that for France the choice was between compliance and war, for Germany was committed too far to the conference proposal for withdrawal without abject humiliation.

In addition to the pledges given to the Sultan, however, there was behind the German Government another driving force – the memory of the Emperor's promise, made at Damascus seven years before (1898) in a moment of religio-political elation, that the "three hundred millions of Mohammedans might always regard him as their friend." To forsake the five million subjects of the Sultan of Morocco, the "Prince of True Believers " – a descendant of the Prophet – would not be reassuring to the rest of the Moslem world; and Baron Marschall, still the ambassador in Constantinople, is reported to have warned the Chancellor that if Germany abandoned Morocco after raising the expectation that her help was to be counted on, she would, "at one stroke forfeit her position in Turkey and therewith the advantage and prospects which we have acquired by years of laborious work."

The hot breath of war was in the air at that time, and while there were in Germany strong forces working for a catastrophe, it is improbable that M. Delcassé, for his part, would have hesitated to accept a decision of arms as an alternative to a conference had the choice rested with him. The Cabinet refused to support him, but at the

meeting at which he was outvoted he spoke of the certainty of British support in the event of a German attack. Here M. Delcassé would appear to have spoken without authority. It is true, however – and nine years later the fact was officially affirmed – that during the ensuing winter the British Foreign Secretary gave to France, on her inquiry, assurances sufficient to justify her in counting on British co-operation in the event of an unprovoked attack upon her by Germany. M. Delcassé resigned after the adverse vote (June 7th), not, indeed, as was represented, on the direct demand of Berlin, yet no less in sign that the influence of Berlin had overpowered his colleagues.

For France, however, the time for a firm stand was singularly unpropitious, for Russia had just emerged from the war with Japan bruised, sore, and for the time disabled, and the treaty of alliance with her seemed to have become all at once a mere documentary record, representing on Russia's side liabilities which she was unable to meet. Even from the German standpoint Delcassé's retirement was none the less a blunder, for it strengthened his ardour in the cause of Anglo-French friendship and his desire to see Great Britain drawn into a triple accord. Some years later he found a congenial sphere of work as the ambassador of his country at St. Petersburg.

In the critical emergency created by M. Delcassé's resignation M. Rouvier, the Premier, took over the management of foreign affairs, and in his hands negotiations soon returned to a cooler temperature. Rouvier made his acceptance of the conference conditional upon a prior understanding between France and Germany on general questions, on the analogy of Russia and Great Britain in 1878, and to this Berlin assented.

By the agreement which followed Germany undertook that she would not at the forthcoming conference pursue any aims which might conflict with the rights of France resulting from treaties or other arrangements so far as they were in harmony with the following principles: the sovereignty and independence of the Sultan, the integrity of his empire, economic liberty subject to no inequality whatever, the introduction of police and financial reforms regulated by international agreement, the recognition of the special position of France in Morocco as created by the contiguity of Algeria and the Shereefian Empire and the intimate relations of these two countries. Justifying the attitude of his Government to the Diet later, the

Emperor said, in a speech from the throne (November 28th), that the difficulties which had arisen at that time between the two countries "had no other origin than an inclination to settle without our co-operation affairs in which the German Empire had also interests to maintain," and in the following year he told Lord Haldane in Berlin, in reference to the Morocco treaty: "If you (the British Government) had only told me early, there would have been no misunderstanding," adding that "what he wanted was, not territory, but trade expansion." France made it a grievance that during the few months of her ascendancy at the Moorish Court Germany had secured commercial privileges of considerable value. Her banks had succeeded in negotiating with the Sultan a loan of large amount, and her diplomatic representative at Tangier, Count Tattenbach, had obtained several important contracts for public works.

The Morocco conference met at Algeciras, in Spain. In demanding it Germany had wished, for her own greater assurance, to supersede a dual bargain between France and Great Britain by an agreed convention of all the Powers, and this was the result. The Powers represented were those which had drawn up the Madrid convention, with Russia in addition, and their delegates conferred from January 16 to April 7, 1906. At the first sitting the president, Duc d'Almodovar. proposed that three postulates should be accepted as a basis of all discussions, viz. the sovereignty of the Sultan, the integrity of his empire, and equality of treatment in commercial matters, i.e. the "open door," and all the delegates agreed.

In the further proceedings the six principals concerned ranged themselves into two camps – France, Spain, Great Britain, and Russia on one side, Germany and Austria on the other. Later (April 12th) Emperor William thanked the Austrian Foreign Minister, Count Goluchowski, for the loyal support given to Germany in the proceedings. "You showed yourself," he said, "a brilliant second on the fencing floor, and you can count on a like service from me on a similar occasion." Italy oftener than not gave her vote in favour of France and not of her ally of the Triple Alliance. Subsequently explaining and condoning this apparent inconsistency, Bülow attributed it to the delicate situation in which Italy found herself, compelled as she was to choose between a new political union and old historical ties, and above all to the fact that, with Germany's full

knowledge, she had already entered into obligations towards France on the Moroccan question which she was not able to ignore. The only Great Power which entered the conference quite unbound was America, and her influence was on the whole favourable to the independence of the sultanate, in so far as the reasonable claims of France and Spain could be satisfied.

The General Act of Algeciras which resulted from the conference bore the date April 7th. The Sultan ratified it on June 18th in a letter reciting the pledge of the Powers that his sovereignty and independence and the integrity of his realm remained inviolate. In seeking his assent on behalf of the Powers, the King of Italy assured him in their name that the treaty would bring "much honour to your Majesty and incalculable good to your Majesty's empire." The Act affirmed the principle of economic equality for all States in relation to Morocco, but recognized that internal reforms were necessary to the country's welfare and security. It therefore contained provisions regarding the organization of the police, the prevention of smuggling and the illicit trade in arms, the execution of public works, the institution of a State bank, the raising of new revenues, the collection of taxes, and the better regulation of the customs and administrative services. French and Spanish officials were to be employed in the police under a Swiss inspector-general, and France and Spain were to cooperate with the Moorish Government in suppressing the illicit trade in arms on the frontiers of their respective possessions; but no preference was given to any of the Powers in connection with trade, industry, or contracts for public works. Upon the fundamental issue raised by Germany for the decision of the Powers the Act was perfectly explicit, for it recognized Morocco as still politically an independent State. France had secured certain rights of interference in minor matters of internal government, and to that extent her preferential position was recognized; but the Act contained no admission whatever, actual or implicit, of any claim on her part to exercise special political influence in the country, still less to territorial rights of any kind.

The German Chancellor professed to regard the results of the conference as satisfactory – "we did not achieve all we desired," he said, "but we achieved the essential things" – and the Ministerial Press, taking its cue from him, declared that "the name of the little

Spanish town of Algeciras will be named in the history of the world with greater and more lasting fame than many a vaunted battle." Bülow was, indeed, much more reasonable and much more easily satisfied than either the Diet or the nation. The Colonial party and the Pan-Germans in particular were incensed by his public confession, " Germany has not, like Spain, been associated with Morocco for several centuries, nor has she, like France, a common frontier of several hundred miles with Morocco; she has not historical rights acquired by all sorts of sacrifices, like those two civilizing nations," crowned as it was by the declaration, "We have no direct political interests and no political aspirations in Morocco." The Pan-Germans had, in fact, wanted a share of Morocco – their eyes were fixed particularly upon Agadir and the region of which it is the vestibule – and to this end they had vehemently agitated to the last day of the conference. This hope foiled, their resentment was unbounded.

While, therefore, the Act of Algeciras did not install France in the sultanate, Germany signed and accepted it as token that she herself looked for no territorial expansion in that part of Africa. For his share in the proceedings at Algeciras Bülow received the title of prince.

Germany's action in calling for a conference of the Powers in 1905 has often been represented as a calculated attempt to weaken the Anglo-French accord, and perhaps force the new friends apart, her assumed reasoning being that if the Morocco dispute led to extreme measures Great Britain would in the end withdraw, from motives of prudence. If that was her aim, it was not realized; on the contrary, the immediate and most visible effect of her action was to place the accord upon a surer and also a more practical basis. To that result the exchange of military confidences to which reference has been made powerfully contributed. Originally the *entente cordiale* had been intended by England to imply no more than a friendly *rapport*, like the informal tie which bound the three Continental empires prior to 1879; but from the first France either understood it as something more or, what is likelier, was determined that it should become such. An amiable courtesy shown by a naturally cold and diffident gentleman was accepted as a declaration of passion by a fascinating lady of ardent temperament, quite ready to be won by the right suitor. And that suitor was the stolid, substantial John Bull. Well as John Bull may have liked the ensuing courtship, he was unquestionably drawn into

it, and for some time most of the wooing and nearly all the tenderness were on the side of France, until the time came when he recognized that what on his part was originally meant to be merely a cordial *camaraderie*, or at most an innocent flirtation, must by all the rules of chivalry end in a formal marriage. But the union was one between equals, and it proved happier than most unions in which chance or design has played a determining part.

After the critical days of 1905 no further doubt existed that the two Powers were determined, and destined, to work together in foreign politics. In the following January the British Foreign Secretary publicly stated that the Liberal Government then newly formed would do its utmost to improve British relations with Germany, but he added that a genuine rapprochement must be dependent upon the existence of a good understanding between Germany and France. As for the Morocco agreement in particular, for Great Britain, who had gone with France so far, there remained now no choice but to see it through to the end, at whatever cost.

FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1906-1913 - THE TRIPLE ENTENTE

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FOR GREAT BRITAIN THE entente with France proved the forerunner of a series of understandings which greatly eased her foreign relations all round, and put an end to the isolation which she had seemed to accept so long as the penalty of fame. By far the most important of the supplementary agreements was that concluded with Russia, greatly to the benefit and satisfaction of her ally. M. Delcassé had described the 1904 agreement from the first as "a means towards the arrangement of a definite understanding between England and Russia." Towards that further accord it had proved at once, if not an intentional, at least a helpful stage.

The unreasoning prejudice against Russia which Disraeli had so successfully fostered, owing in no small measure to resentment at the persecutions experienced by his race under Muscovite rule, continued to infect a large part of the British nation long after he had passed away, and disenabled it to judge the aims of Russian policy candidly and on their merits, or to weigh justly Great Britain's true interests whenever the two countries came in contact. The conversion of British public opinion advanced quickly after Lord Salisbury, influenced by the readiness with which Turkey, from the early 'nineties of last century forward, had responded to the overtures of Germany, a country which hitherto had shown but little interest in her welfare, had declared his belief that England had been "putting her money on the wrong horse." The settlement of the Afghan frontier question in 1893 had removed one source of constant danger, but the relations of the two Powers with Persia still presented serious possibilities of friction. Perhaps nothing contributed more to the lessening of Russian distrust than the attitude held by the British Government after the Russo-Japanese war. Before hostilities broke out the British Foreign Office did its best to prevent a rupture, warning St. Petersburg repeatedly of its imminence and grave consequences. The warnings were not heeded, but at least their sincerity was recognized when they proved to have been only too well founded. Later the influence of Great Britain with Japan was able to mitigate to the beaten Power the penalties of defeat.

A new era in Anglo-Russian relationships was opened by the conclusion, on August 31, 1907, after long and delicate negotiations, of an agreement by which the two Powers adjusted all outstanding questions between them in Central Asia. As to Afghanistan, the

ancient centre of contention, Russia declared that she had no interest therein, while Great Britain affirmed her intention to respect the existing political status, not to appropriate any part of the country, and not to interfere in its internal affairs. Further, the two Powers divided Persia into spheres of influence, while recognizing its integrity and independence: a north-central zone was marked off for Russia's special activity, the southern zone, including the Gulf, was similarly assigned to Great Britain, and between these zones was left a neutral territory. The agreement also provided for the construction of a railway through Persia connecting with Central Europe through Batoum and with India through Charbur. Special care was taken on this occasion to avoid wounding German sensibilities. "During the course of the negotiations," the German Foreign Secretary, Herr von Schön, told the Diet (March 24, 1908), "both Powers had spontaneously offered to Germany the assurance that her interests would be in nowise infringed."

Describing later (February 16, 1911) the purpose of the agreement, the British Foreign Secretary said: "The object of the agreement was this: two great nations who had frequently been at diplomatic tension and friction with each other came to the conclusion that if they were to live together peaceably in Asia they must not work against each other's interests." It should be added, however, that the interests of the signatory Powers were advanced more visibly than were those of Persia, which, in spite of the guarantee of its independence, became henceforth subject to interferences, particularly from Russia, of a character difficult to reconcile with its right to be regarded as a suzerain State. The effect of the Anglo-Russian understanding was to dispel for Great Britain the spectre of a Russian menace in Far Asia which, with little intermission, had disturbed her peace for a century and ever since the Crimean War had proved a recurrent source of division and estrangement in her domestic politics. For Russia, and therefore for Germany, the importance of the understanding lay in the fact that as she now renounced further advance in the East she was all the freer to turn her glances to the West. The reorientation of the Great Powers which had been the aim of the German Emperor when he opened the era of *Weltpolitik* had thus made further progress, but on lines little contemplated by that Sovereign at the time.

Great Britain did not, in consequence of the agreement of 1907, join the Franco-Russian alliance, but she counted henceforth as the good friend of both of the allies. The Triple Alliance, described by Bülow as "a mighty fortification dividing the Continent into two," had now received its counterpart in the Triple Entente. The British Foreign Secretary spoke of the enlarged accord as merely a "diplomatic group." It was, however, from the first more than that, and as time passed it became very much more. In June of the following year (1908) the reconciliation of Great Britain and Russia was cemented by the meeting of King Edward and the Czar at Reval. Meanwhile, both France and Russia, who had jointly opposed Japan's aspirations in 1895, concluded agreements with that Power (June and July, 1907, respectively) guaranteeing their reciprocal rights in China and the integrity of that empire.

If the Franco-Russian alliance had proved a critical moment in the foreign relations of Russia, the Anglo-Russian entente marked a new step in the emancipation of her political life from German influence. Owing to the domination of feudal Conservatism in German politics that influence had always been in the direction of reaction, not merely because for Prussia an autocracy in the East was an admirable counterpoise to a democracy in the West, but because it was recognized that the longer a national awakening could be delayed in Russia the more time would Germany have in which to prepare for the inevitable clash between Teutonism and Slavism. Gortchakoff once said that " Russia might be dumb but she was not deaf." Silently and wistfully Russia had long listened to the stirrings: of the Western spirit, unable to make response. Now suddenly, yet amid appalling convulsions, utterance came, and the last and greatest of Europe's despotisms passed into the fellowship of constitutional States. The revolution of 1905 and the succeeding introduction of parliamentary government (March, 1906) marked a turning-point in Russia's political relationships with her Western neighbour. From the first Liberal Russia turned away from Germany to England, as to the mother of free institutions, and the Duma based its rules, precedents, and analogies almost wholly on English experience.

When, however, Russia, casting her gaze above and beyond the central barrier to political progress which extended from the Vistula to the Rhine, began thus to respond more and more to the liberating

influences of Western civilization, Germany betrayed a deepening consciousness of the "Slavic peril," and began to anticipate with anxiety the destiny of the adjacent empire. There was one compensation, for Turkey, knowing no longer where to turn, now placed herself more completely than before under German protection.

The British treaties with France and Russia were supplemented by other agreements of a minor yet important character, the effect of which was to strengthen the Triple Entente. In the summer of 1907 Notes were exchanged between the Governments of Great Britain and Spain, and between those of France and Spain, and later communicated to the other Powers, setting forth their intention to maintain the *status quo* in the Mediterranean. Between Great Britain and Italy there had always existed a strong bond of sympathy, and it seemed as though events were fast fulfilling Bismarck's prediction that whenever the time came, as come it would, for Italy to choose between the Powers, she would inevitably side with England and her allies, whoever these might be.

Italy's attitude both towards France and Germany had also been profoundly modified since 1882, when under Bismarck's influence she became a member of the Triple Alliance. In attaching her to that alliance, as he did by so astutely making Tunis a bone of contention, Bismarck had only one aim in view, to prevent her reconciliation with France. For a long time, however, the question of Tunis was alone sufficient to make such a reconciliation impossible, while, on the other hand, France let it be known, on every fitting occasion, that an ally of Germany could never be a true friend of hers. When Signor Crispi, following Depretis, came to power in August, 1887, the relations between the Latin Powers soon became further strained owing to the suspicion entertained in France that Italy, under the new Premier, was allowing herself to be swayed in her foreign politics by excessive consideration for Germany's good-will. Crispi had visited Bismarck for several days in October, and from that time forward he remained under the spell of that statesman, ready to follow him wherever he should be pleased to lead.

Six years had passed since France took the first step that was to bring Tunis altogether under her control, yet Crispi still resolutely refused to surrender the rights which Italy claimed under the Capitulations without equivalent advantages elsewhere. Equity was on

his side, but hardly prudence, since in maintaining this stubborn attitude he was exposing his country to the risk of further disappointments in North Africa, for the movements of France gave rise to the suspicion that she intended to appropriate the hinterland of Tripoli and thus to cut off communication between that Turkish province, long coveted by Italy, but as yet not occupied by her, and the interior. When in July, 1890, there were rumours of the impending conclusion of a treaty between France and the Bey of Tunis, by which French influence in that country was to be placed on a permanent footing, Crispi urgently appealed to the German Government, on the strength of its obligations under the Triple Alliance, for assistance in securing a settlement that should pay due regard to Italian interests. Bisinarck was now no longer in office, but that fact did not make less difficult the position of his successor, whose hands were bound by Germany's action in encouraging France in her Tunisian enterprises from 1878 forward. "Desirous and eager" as he was to help Italy, therefore, all that Caprivi could do was to urge that pressure should be put upon the Governments of Vienna and particularly of London. To Great Britain Crispi accordingly appealed on the ground that her position in Egypt would be threatened if France were allowed to extend her influence further in Northern Africa. Let Italy have Tripoli and she would be satisfied. "As Tunis cannot be rendered independent and the Protectorate prevented from becoming one day or another a sovereignty," he wrote to Lord Salisbury (July 23, 1890), "it is of great importance that we provide against the future occupation of Tripoli by France by forestalling her. If we held Tripoli, Biserta would cease to be a menace either to Italy or Great Britain. We are your necessary allies and our union guarantees your dominion in Malta and Egypt."

Great Britain was already pledged to the recognition of the new status in Tunis, and was also at that time negotiating a convention – which was actually signed the following month – under which France was to recognize the new British protectorate over Zanzibar and Great Britain to recognize the French protectorate over Madagascar, and to agree to the appointment of a joint commission to delimit the territories under French influence in Africa. Nevertheless, Lord Salisbury gave Crispi the reassuring reply that he was " convinced that on the day that the *status quo* in the Mediterranean shall suffer any

alteration whatever, Italy's occupation of Tripoli will become an absolute necessity." "The interests of Europe," he said, "demand this occupation, that the Mediterranean may be prevented from becoming a French lake"; and he added that Italy should have Tripoli whether Great Britain remained permanently in Egypt or not. He was of opinion, however, that the time for action had not yet come. In August, M. Ribot, the French Foreign Secretary, added his assurance to the Italian ambassador in Paris that France likewise would not be indisposed to see Italy established in Tripoli, provided she would cease to cry over the spilt milk of Tunis, and would withdraw from the Triple Alliance.

When four years later Germany, by an agreement of February 4, 1894, recognized the *hinterland* of Tripoli as falling within the sphere of French influence, Crispi, who had just returned to power, after three years of retirement, was himself constrained to admit that the Triple Alliance had ceased to be for Italy a source of security or strength, since it only excited French hostility, while guaranteeing to her no effective support from her treaty friends. He dated the decline of its efficacy from the fall of its author from power. Later, during the Chancellorship of Hohenlohe, he told Herr von Bülow, when German ambassador in Rome: "I had perceived the advantages of the alliance in Bismarck's day, but not afterwards with his successors. Previous to the year 1890 whenever a question arose I had only to notify Bismarck, who would immediately make his voice heard in London or Paris, and the matter would be settled." More despondently he said on another occasion: "It is said that the Triple Alliance was established for the maintenance of peace. For us it has had the opposite effect. For us the Triple Alliance means war."

Italy knew, of course, that if France were to attack her, or force her into a position in which the alternatives would be war or intolerable humiliation, Germany would be certain to intervene. But the assurance that relief would be at hand in case of extremity did not prevent the existence of a condition of perpetual tension and harassment, and this Germany did and could do little to abate. So it continued for some time longer, until, to the alarm of Germany and the satisfaction of France, Crispi fell in March, 1896, discredited by the disastrous issue of the last of the Erythrean campaigns. Depressed by the thought that the Triple Alliance was bringing Italy increasing

responsibilities with decreasing advantages, he had written to the Italian ambassador in Berlin just a month before: " Berlin cannot be ignorant of the strength which diplomatic compacts derive in our day from the support of the masses, especially when those compacts imply a brotherhood in arms and in the shedding of blood. The Italian people are not yet disillusioned with regard to the alliance with Germany, but who can guarantee that they may not be so to-morrow if things continue as they are?" These representations were by Crispi's wish brought to the knowledge of the Emperor, upon whom they made such an impression that he determined at once to visit the Italian King. Before the intention could be put into effect Crispi had resigned on a vote of no confidence.

Italy's enthusiasm for foreign adventures had for some time been cooling down, since the most tangible results so far had been prodigal sacrifice of life and treasure, a heavy burden of taxation and debt, and a serious loss of military prestige. It was not unnatural, therefore, that the immediate effect of Crispi's fall should be the reversal by the succeeding Government of Rudini of his philo-German policy and its decision to put an end to the eternal bickerings with France. M. Bourgeois, the French Minister-President, had told the Italian ambassador in Paris early in the year: "In this country all eyes tire fixed upon the lost provinces, and all are aware that Italy's alliance with Germany is an obstacle in the way of their return to the mother country. You must accept the fact that so long as you belong to the Triple Alliance no understanding with us is possible." Italy could give no promise to forsake her allies, but by an agreement concluded with France on September 28, 1896, the first step was taken towards ending the long-standing estrangement. By this agreement Italy withdrew all special claims to Tunis, while France undertook to give to Italy a free hand in Tripoli. Two years later a commercial peace was also concluded between the two countries by a convention of November 21, 1898, and thereafter French money began to flow again freely into the peninsula. By a further convention of 1900 Italy recognized the preferential position of France in Morocco, while France now formally recognized Italy's special claims in Tripoli and Cyrenaica. For a time nothing further was done towards extending Italian influence in that region; it was sufficient to know that the danger of being forestalled, as had happened in Tunis, had now

entirely disappeared. When two years later the Triple Alliance came to be renewed (again, it was understood, for twelve years), the Italian Foreign Minister stated publicly (May 23, 1902) that the Italian treaty had been adjusted to the new relationships with France, and that from the Italian standpoint the Alliance had now no aggressive character as regards that Power.

Her vigorous, patriotic, but costly empire-builder, Crispi, having left the arena which he had dominated in one capacity or another for nearly twenty years, and the differences with France having been passably adjusted, Italy regained full independence of action, and with it a decided bias towards the *entente* Powers speedily showed itself. More and more the conviction was forced upon her that the Triple Alliance existed only for the good of the two Empires, and that she herself was merely the superfluous third who spoils good company. Even now her defection from the Alliance seemed to be only a question of time and occasion. While there was still no reason in political conditions why Germany and Italy at least should cease to be friends, there was every reason why Italy and Austria should continue to be enemies so long as the Irredentist districts, with their million of Italians, remained under Habsburg rule. If, however, Italy's attachment to the alliance became weaker, all the closer and stronger became the basic union between Germany and Austria, Italy's adhesion to which was posterior and subsidiary. A little incident which occurred in 1907 was as the proverbial straw telling how the wind blew. That year was appointed for the holding of the second Peace Conference at The Hague. Before it met the British Cabinet, as has been stated, sought support amongst the Powers for a discussion of the general subject of disarmament. While Germany and Austria replied that no practical proposal on the subject was possible, and declined to consider it, their ally, Italy, groaning under the burden of the military and naval' expenditure which the Triple Alliance had imposed on her, declined to take in advance a negative attitude. In April King Edward and Victor Emmanuel met at Gaeta, and in referring to the meeting in the Chamber on May 15th the Italian Foreign Minister, Tittoni, affirmed Italy's unchanging friendship for England and declared the Government's readiness to discuss the limitation of armaments. Although in the ensuing conference Germany's principal delegate, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein,

succeeded in thwarting the pacifist movement, even wrecking the British proposal for compulsory arbitration, it was significant that Italy's influence was not thrown on the side of her allies.

These several accords and understandings, together with her ancient alliances with Portugal, as renewed by the Windsor Treaty of 1899, and that with Japan, dating from 1902, made England early in the century the centre of a constellation of warm friendships almost unique in her history. Now it was the turn of Germany, whose foreign policy had for over a generation been built up on military alliances and political combinations, to face the prospect of growing isolation. After she had endeavoured to draw every European Power in turn into her orbit, Germany herself seemed in the way of becoming the eccentric comet of the political firmament, pursuing no fixed course, but driven hither and thither by conflicting forces.

This remarkable change in the positions of the two Powers not merely synchronized with, but was in no small degree a result of, the growing uneasiness to which Germany's activity in foreign politics had given rise. It would be unjustifiable to regard the measures adopted at that time in the name of *Weltpolitik* as deliberately intended to be a provocative challenge to other countries. From the standpoint of prudence alone rulers and statesmen prone to rashness of the kind would first need to satisfy themselves that behind them was a military power vastly superior to any combination likely to be opposed to it. But, notwithstanding their continuous growth, the defensive resources of the Empire had never been so paramount as to justify any, such assumption. This became more than ever the case after the formation of the Franco-Russian alliance. Apologizing to Crispi in 1896, when the current of *Weltpolitik* was in full flux, for his inability to espouse Italy's grievances against France with the vigour which that statesman desired, Baron Marschall, the Foreign Secretary, pleaded, with good reason, the fact that Germany could no longer "tenir le verbe haut" as in the old days, when France was weak and Russia had not become her ally. Now, he said, she had to be prepared to back up every word with acts if necessary; hence arose the need for circumspection and restraint.

If, however, German statesmen were conscious of this need, as in the abstract they doubtless were, so much the more remarkable was their omission to pay heed to it in practice. To acquit them of

deliberate design to disturb the tranquillity of Europe is not to condone the policy which had that effect. At home as well as abroad this policy was freely criticized as one of indiscriminate imperialism, and the prejudice which it created was magnified by the singular faculty of its authors for choosing the wrong means for attaining their ends. Germany was eager for power and prestige abroad, yet troubled little to consider how these might be most wisely obtained; she sought empire, and in seeking it gave the impression that she expected to enrich herself at the expense of other nations; in both of these quests her ruler and statesmen were wanting as much in discrimination as in patience. The policy was also vitiated by want of foresight, definiteness, and consistency. Never did the Emperor and his advisers seem to have a clear perception of the aims which they were following, or to hold for long to the pursuit of any given objective. The "new course," direct enough at first, so long as it concerned itself with domestic affairs, became in foreign policy under the lethargic Hohenlohe, and still more under the compliant and supple Bülow, a "zig-zag course." Friendships were sought and sundered with an indifference to the consequences which bewildered old-fashioned statesmen; and endeavours, more daring than astute, were constantly made to play off one Power against another, a species of diplomacy in which Bismarck excelled, but hopelessly beyond the capacity of his successors. In these hazardous enterprises, as the Björkö Treaty of 1905 showed, candour was not always conspicuous.

While Bismarck continued at the helm, German foreign policy was directed towards the one aim of making secure the imperial structure which he had erected; never did he intervene, except under compulsion, in international politics, and even then the part which he played was that of the mediator and conciliator; while of "prestige politics" he had an honest detestation. From the closing years of the century forward this attitude of prudent restraint was abandoned, and Germany embarked upon a succession of aggressive enterprises and interferences in all parts of the world, obviously undertaken without definite plan and sometimes, it seemed, without any other purpose except to remind other Powers that nothing might be done, within the sphere of international politics, without her active co-operation. A foreign policy dictated by that motive was bound to prove a source of widespread unrest, distrust and irritation, and in fact it left Germany's

relations with the rest of Europe less friendly than ever before. It is true that the Triple Alliance continued and that Turkey had been gained, but the old union was already marked for disruption, while the new one was from the first a source of weakness rather than strength.

But a further result of this policy of foreign adventure was that in the end it undermined at home the old sense of national security. "What to-day complicates and makes difficult our position," said the Imperial Chancellor (Bülow) in the Diet on February 19, 1907, "are our oversea endeavours and interests. If we were not involved in this direction, we should not be so susceptible on the Continent, and it would be easier than it is to avoid friction with England." To this avowal Dr. Riemer, the spokesman of the Radical party, replied: "That is what we have always said – that Germany's European position, which for us is the principal concern, would not be made easier, but more difficult, by engagements of the kind. This holds good of our unfruitful colonial policy, but still more of what is called *Weltpolitik*." It has been shown how a vigorous policy of naval and military expansion was entered upon as a necessary counterpart of the Emperor's foreign enterprises. Other countries were compelled in turn to increase their armaments in self-defence, and the irony of the resulting situation was that in the end Germany, after setting in motion this disastrous competition, came to regard it as a justification for her own determination to outdistance her rivals in warlike preparations.

As they contrasted Great Britain's multiplying friendships with the growing isolation of their own country, German politicians saw something uncanny and malign in the formation of alliances and accords without noisy protestation and clatter of sabres. There was talk of deep designs against Germany's position and security. It was assumed that to be friendly to France and Russia necessarily meant to be hostile to their neighbour. The theory was now set up that the British Government, inspired by the least designing of men, King Edward, was deliberately endeavouring to compass the political "encirclement" of Germany in the hope of reducing her to impotence. Bülow, who took politics far too lightly ever to lose his head in the midst of the ensuing irrational alarm, told his countrymen that "the alleged 'encirclement' of Germany is no more than a phrase: German

policy has not hitherto been obstructed by the *ententes* concluded around us, and it will not be obstructed." He even confessed that England had often "had a soothing and sobering effect on France, and has done valuable work for the preservation of peace in Europe." All such assurances failed to carry conviction or to afford relief; the fear of "encirclement" became to the German nation, what the fear of coalitions had been to Bismarck, a nightmare; and to the Chauvinists the measure of England's popularity was the measure of her perfidy.

Much – undoubtedly too much – of the credit for the English policy of accords and the success which attended it has been awarded to King Edward. Be his claims as they may, no Sovereign of modern times deserved better of his country than the affable gentleman who, without a trace of *double entendre* in his nature, succeeded by personal charm, unfailing tact, a flexibility of mind far more French than English, and above all by consummate common sense, in winning friends on every hand for his country and for peace. Not without reason did he earn in France the title of *roi pacificateur*.

Throughout these early "encirclement" scares and controversies the two rulers continued on the best of terms. Following a visit by the King to the Emperor at Cassel in August, 1907, the Emperor (accompanied by the Empress) visited Windsor in the following November and in London was received with marked cordiality. He was banqueted at the Guildhall, where he made a speech reiterating his attachment to England and used the words "Blood is thicker than water"; he was made a freeman of the City; and the University of Oxford conferred on him the degree of doctor of laws. A visit to Berlin made by King Edward and Queen Alexandra in February, 1909, though it was generally welcomed, failed to destroy the "encirclement" myth, which still lingered after the King's death in May of the following year. Germany's alarm was that of the nervous night-watcher who has "seen something." To her the apparition was unmistakably real, and nothing ever convinced her that it was merely the figment of a disturbed imagination.

In the meantime Germany had joined the other maritime Powers of the North in concluding two notable treaties of friendship (April 23, 1908), one the North Sea Convention, by which Germany, Great Britain, France, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden undertook to be good neighbours, to respect each other's sovereign rights, and to

maintain the *status quo* in those waters and the adjacent territories, and the other the Baltic Sea Convention, by which Germany, Russia, Denmark, and Sweden pledged themselves to the same objects.

Before this time the question of Morocco had passed through several stages. If Germany had resented the attitude of France on this question during the controversies of 1904 to 1906, much more did she resent it in the course of the later developments. The year after the Algeciras Conference Prince von Bülow authorized a French journalist to assure his countrymen (July, 1907): "You may be sure that we are not going to place obstacles in your way in Morocco. The Algeciras convention will be loyally observed by us. You, on your part, must carry on the economic policy of the 'open door' sincerely and without *arrière pensée:* Germany will ask no more of you." Events soon showed that too many cooks had been engaged on the Morocco dish, with the proverbial result: the country did not settle down under the restraints of a police system imposed from the outside.

From the standpoint of Europe at large one of the most important articles of the Act of Algeciras was the last (No. 123) which declared: "All existing treaties, conventions and arrangements between the signatory Powers and Morocco re main in force. It is agreed, however, that in case their provisions be found to conflict with those of the present General Act the stipulations of the latter shall prevail." It might have seemed that if this provision meant anything at all, it meant that the secret articles of the two French conventions were annulled, and that any attempt to enforce them would be an act of bad faith towards the other treaty Powers.

Such, however, was not the view adopted officially in France, who had bargained away her rights in Egypt and expected to receive the covenanted *quid pro quo.* From June, 1906, forward France was drawn into repeated interventions, both diplomatic and military, in the affairs of Morocco of a kind not authorized by the Act of Algeciras, justifying them by the prevalent disorders – the conflict of rival claimants to the throne and tribal disturbances on the Algerian frontier – but also by disputes over railway concessions in which French subjects were concerned, and by the interest in the country's tranquillity which was created by the ever-increasing amount of the French loans. The inability of the Sultan to maintain order and guarantee security in his own dominion became more evident from

day to day. Nevertheless, for several years after the conclusion of the Act of Algeciras the French Chamber periodically and consistently affirmed its adhesion to the fundamental basis of the treaty – the independence of Morocco and the integrity of the Sultan's sovereignty.

The outlook became more serious after the murder of French, Spanish, and Italian subjects in 1907 and 1908. A strong French force occupied Udja in March, 1907, and when in July Casablanca was given up to anarchy, following native riots arising out of the execution of certain French engineering contracts, French and Spanish warships bombarded the town and then landed troops to occupy it. The two Powers had communicated their intentions beforehand to the German Government, which formally acquiesced in their action. In the midst of the disorders Mulai Abdul Aziz was deposed, and his brother Mulai Hafid succeeded him (January, 1908). Germany hastened to acknowledge the new Sultan, and on his promise to observe faithfully the Act of Algeciras, the French, Spanish, and British Governments followed suit. It had become abundantly clear, however, that no native ruler of Morocco was capable, single-handed, of keeping the peace which was so necessary to his neighbours, and forced by the logic of events, as the German Government later admitted, France showed a disposition to exaggerate the scope of the special position in the country which the Powers had accorded to her in 1906. In the autumn of 1908 strong diplomatic representations were made by the German Government to Paris owing to violence done to a German consul at Casablanca, who had helped German, Austrian, and Russian deserters from the Foreign Legion to escape. The dispute was eventually referred to the tribunal of The Hague.

Early in 1909, Great Britain standing aside, the French and German Governments concluded a separate agreement (February 8th), very favourable to France, which it was hoped would solve all difficulties. By it the two Powers declared themselves "equally anxious to facilitate the execution of the Act of Algeciras," and undertook not to procure any economic privilege either in their own favour or in that of any other country. While, further, France repeated her firm attachment to "the maintenance of the independence and integrity of the Shereefian Empire" and promised not to obstruct German commercial and industrial interests in particular, Germany again affirmed that her concern in Morocco was purely economic, and now

recognized that France had special political interests there. In this further act of abstention the German Government had again to resist powerful influences at home, where the colonial party and more particularly the Pan-Germans were still clamouring for a policy of open aggression and the appropriation of a part of Morocco before France obtained the whole.

The time came, however, when Germany felt compelled to protest, justifiably or not, that in spite of good-will and concessions on her part France was not showing an equal spirit of reasonableness. Disputes arose out of the attempt by French *entrepreneurs* to assert an exclusive position in regard to certain mining and railway undertakings, in which German capitalists wished to participate. French military operations also multiplied, and Germany feared that aggressive designs were behind them. "Our action at Udja is not a step towards Fez," M. Pichon, the French Foreign Minister, had written to the *chargé d'affaires* at the Moorish capital on March 30, 1907. It was for the present only a step towards Casablanca, but the further step to Fez was soon to follow. When early in 1911 a new rebellion broke out and his own military force proved insufficient to quell it, the Sultan called in the help of France, and in May a large French force under General Moinier occupied the capital on the plea that the lives of Europeans were in danger. The French Government assured the signatory Powers that as soon as peace and security had been established the troops would be withdrawn. The British Government promptly signified its approval of the measure taken. The German Government raised no formal objection, but taking note of the purpose of the expedition and the pledge of withdrawal, informed the French Foreign Minister that "should the expedition go beyond its alleged object, even should such action be merely the result of circumstances arising out of the expedition," it would regard the Act of Algeeiras as no longer binding and would reserve to itself full liberty of action. The French occupation of Fez led to the Spanish occupation of Laraish. and El-Kasr, on the North Atlantic coast, and in each ease the force of occupation remained.

Contending that the latest armed intervention of France was a direct infraction of the Act of Algeciras, and believing that unless a firm stand were now taken all the treaties and agreements regulating the affairs of Morocco might as well be torn up, the German

Government called upon France either to abide by the strict letter of her obligations or, if these were to be ignored, to offer to Germany compensation. The proposal that Germany might withdraw all claims in Morocco save those of an economic character, provided France were prepared to cede territory elsewhere, had been made with the acquiescence and even the encouragement of the French Foreign Minister shortly after the Emperor's visit to Tangier. Part of the French Congo had been suggested as a suitable equivalent, but formal negotiations had not yet been opened.

Now, as before, the French Government did not reject the idea of compensation, but neither was it in a hurry to make definite proposals on the subject. Failing to obtain satisfaction, the German Government at the end of June sent a gunboat to the closed port of Agadir in West Morocco. Whether the proceeding was urgently necessary or not, there was at least no secrecy about it, for the Powers privy to the Algeciras treaty simultaneously received a verbal notification (June 30th) in which the insecurity of German subjects was pleaded in justification and the promise was given that "as soon as the state of affairs in Morocco has resumed the former tranquil aspect the vessel charged with this protective mission will leave the port of Agadir." The communication made to the British Government set forth various acts done by France in alleged contravention of the treaty of 1906. Just before this the Emperor had made one of his politico-domestic visits to England.

At the beginning of July Europe was startled by the news that the *Panther* had arrived in Moroccan waters, and the conclusion was widely drawn that Germany, after long professing disinterested motives, had now changed her mind and was determined to obtain a footing in the sultanate. It was also recalled that Agadir was the port which the Pan-German League had for years been urging the Government to appropriate as a naval station and the vestibule to an eligible *hinterland.* At a later date (November 17th) the Foreign Secretary, Herr von Kiderlen-Wächter, told the Diet that the intention to set foot in Morocco was never entertained, such a step being "impossible after the agreement of 1906, which has since been the directing principle of our action." Nevertheless, German writers have frankly admitted that if the suspicion of an acquisitive design prevailed abroad, as it did, the action of the Pan- Germans and

imperialists at the time amply justified it. In the assistance which it gave to France in the critical conjuncture the British Government faithfully observed the bond of April, 1904. From the first it even seemed to attach to the Agadir incident an exaggerated importance, and one which was not, on the whole, attributed to it in France.

After the French Government had despatched the expedition to Fez "for the succour of Europeans," the British Foreign Secretary had publicly stated (May 2nd) that his Government "could not see why any objection should be taken to it." Germany now retorted that she could not understand why objection should be offered to a passive demonstration designed to ensure the safety of her own subjects. Confronted by the charge that the Agadir incident was an intimation that it was determined to reopen the Morocco question, the German Foreign Office replied that the question had already been reopened by France when she intervened in the affairs of the sultanate in a manner neither sanctioned nor contemplated by the Act of Algeciras. Undoubtedly a new situation had arisen in Morocco, but it was only one of a series of new situations which had been created during the past seven years, first by France and Great Britain jointly in concluding the bipartite convention of April, 1904, and later by the action of France in going beyond the strict letter of the treaties to which she was a party.

In the meantime the German and French Governments, in the persons of Herr von Kiderlen-Wächter and M. Jules Cambon respectively, were negotiating in Berlin on the subject of compensation. By prearrangement the negotiations were carried on in secret, but such facts as came to light indicated that Germany was making excessive demands. Her Foreign Minister had deemed the occasion opportune for consolidating and greatly extending the German dominion in Central Africa, and it was understood that while offering to cede to France her little colony of Togoland, he had asked for the greater part of the French Congo region in return. For a time a deadlock threatened. Then Great Britain intervened in circumstances which recalled the Palmerstonian thrills of half a century before. In an interview with the German ambassador, Count Wolff Metternich, on July 21st, the Foreign Secretary referred to "news which appeared the day before as to the demands which the German Government had made on the French Government – demands which were in effect, not

a rectification of the frontier, but a cession of the French Congo – and which it was obviously impossible for the French Government to concede," and being in the dark, he asked for precise information concerning Germany's intentions in regard to Morocco and her territorial claims elsewhere. Unable to reply in detail, the ambassador promised to communicate with his Government, meanwhile giving the assurance that Germany had no intention of acquiring territory in Morocco, and that nothing would be done by her which could injure British interests, yet adding that if France wished to proclaim a protectorate over the country, Germany would require an equivalent elsewhere, just as Great Britain had done already.

The same evening Sir Edward Grey, after consultation with the Prime Minister, caused a public warning to be issued to Germany, reminding her that in treating with France she was also treating with France's Western ally. The sensation caused by the movements of the *Panther* was insignificant in comparison with that created by a considered statement made on July 21st at the Mansion House by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Lloyd George, who, in referring to the dual negotiations, said:

"If a situation were to be forced on us in which peace could only be preserved by the surrender of the great and beneficent position Britain has won by centuries of heroism and achievement, by allowing Britain to be treated, where her interests are vitally affected, as if she were of no account in the Cabinet of nations, then I say emphatically that peace at that price would be a humiliation intolerable for a great country like ours to endure."

The effect of the speech was explosive, for the outside world had had no apprehension of any danger to peace, and public opinion, in England and elsewhere, approved or disapproved according as it favoured France or Germany in the Moroccan controversy. The claim that England should not be overlooked was in the circumstances perfectly justifiable, but it gave to the anti-British Press in Germany a peg upon which to hang anew its complaint that in the initial agreement for the settlement of Morocco Germany had been altogether ignored. Recalling the incident at a later date (December 5, 1911), when the Morocco question had been settled in a manner acceptable to the three Governments, the German Chancellor stated:

"Sir Edward Grey said that the Chancellor of the Exchequer by his

speech wished to make it clear, without provocation, that where English interests were affected England could not be treated as if she did not count. I claim the same right for Germany. When, however, I look back, I find that the Moroccan complications arose because this right had not always been accorded to Germany. The year 1904, in which England and France disposed of Morocco without consideration for the interests which Germany had in the settlement of the Moroccan problem, was the *proton pseudos* (fundamental error). From this proceeded the necessity for us to go to Algeciras, and then to Agadir; in other words, the necessity for us to safeguard our economic interests ourselves and to show the world that we are firmly resolved not to suffer ourselves to be pushed on one side."

The Mansion House speech was not allowed, however, to disturb the pacific course of events; referring to these at a later date, Sir Edward Grey claimed (November 27, 1911): "Everything we did or said in our communications with the French Government was in the direction of helping and not impeding the negotiations." The German Government protested against the speech at the time, both through its ambassador in London and in the Diet, as incendiary, but the idea of either defiance or offence having been at once disclaimed by the British Foreign Secretary, the incident was regarded as closed. None the less, Europe was greatly relieved when it was announced that an agreement had been concluded on November 4th by which Germany gave to France a perfectly free hand in regard to future political developments in Morocco, even to the extent of acquiescing in a protectorate should that be deemed necessary. On the other hand, the treaty contained stipulations of great value to the Powers generally, for the economic equality which France in 1904 had guaranteed to maintain in Morocco for thirty years was now made permanent; trading monopolies which she had hoped to secure for herself were renounced; in a word, the principle of the "open door," with equal opportunity for every one who passed in, was explicitly affirmed, and a guarantee was given that in Morocco the exclusive methods which were a tradition of French colonial administration, and which inflicted as much harm upon the colonies themselves as upon the countries wishful to trade with them, should not be applied. In these respects Germany rendered to Europe in connection with Morocco the same service which she had rendered in connection with the Congo in 1884

and 1885.

Nor was territorial compensation overlooked. Three years before, indeed, the German Foreign Secretary had assured M. Jules Cambon: "We cannot barter Morocco's right for territory or indeed for anything else: honour obliges us to respect the independence and maintain the integrity of the Sultan's dominions, and we are fully determined to obey the dictates of honour." Under stress of temptation that virtuous resolve was forgotten. Germany's material consideration consisted of a slice (about one-third) of the French Congo, adjacent to her colony of the Cameroons, in extent over 100,000 square miles, without prejudice to the mining and other rights held by French adventurers. France also waived in Germany's favour her right of pre-emption in regard to Spanish Guinea, Corisco Island, and the Elobey Islands, belonging to Spain, and, more important still, she abandoned the right of pre-emption in relation to the Congo State which she had obtained from King Leopold of Belgium in 1884, and agreed that any proposed change in the status of that State should be submitted to the Powers which were parties to the Congo Act of 1885, and thus become a matter of international arrangement.

For Germany the Morocco agreement thus concluded was, in all its aspects, an advantageous one. Not only had she reaped solid territorial gains elsewhere, but by concluding a bargain with France alone and recognizing French influence in the whole of Morocco, she had left the other Powers interested in the country to settle as they would whatever misunderstandings, arising out of their secret arrangements, the future might bring forth. While henceforth, from the territorial standpoint, Germany's interest in this sorely tried country ceased, the commitments and obligations of Great Britain remained in full force. Simultaneously with the conclusion of this agreement it was gravely announced that all danger to the lives and property of German subjects had passed away at Agadir, and by the end of November the *Panther* and the other vessels which had been sent to support it steamed away.

"You are now masters in Morocco," were the words with which the German Chancellor – since the middle of 1909 Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg – described to M. Jules Cambon (who had signed the treaty on behalf of France) the effect of the final Morocco settlement. That was also the impression formed in Germany as soon as its terms were

known. The consequence was a renewed outburst of indignation on the part of the Chauvinists, who clamoured for the dismissal of the Minister who, in their view, had brought upon his country an unexampled humiliation. The Pan-Germans in particular, knowing well that this was Germany's last opportunity of gaining a foothold in Morocco, had made extraordinary attempts to stir up national feeling on behalf of a strong forward policy, and as soon as it was found that the Government had left France in full possession of all she had asked for they raised the cry that the country had been betrayed. In the course of fiery debates in the Diet, Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg protested (November 9th and 10th) that Morocco was not worth a European war, and maintained that Germany had reason to be satisfied with the settlement, since it had relieved the tension all round.

" Morocco," he said, "was like a continually festering wound in our relations not only with France, but also with England. The French expedition to Fez led to an acute stage and rendered an operation necessary. We have performed the operation in order to heal the wound. We should never have reached the result now before you if both Governments had not steered for the same goal. I consider it a great gain that it should have been possible for Germany and France to arrive at a peaceful understanding on such a delicate question as that of Morocco, involving as it did so many dangers, open and concealed. . . . In virtue of treaty stipulations England stood on the side of France, at least diplomatically, in all differences between us and France respecting Morocco. Our understanding with France accordingly also cleans the slate in respect to our relations with England."

All such pleas, however, were wasted upon the imperialists, for they seemed only to confirm their accusation that Germany had made an ignominious surrender. It was in vain that the Chancellor warned the war party that "To raise national passions to boiling-point for the sake of Utopian schemes of conquest, and for party ends, is to compromise the patriotism which is our most valuable possession." So far did passion supplant judgment that the remarkable spectacle was witnessed of the Crown Prince applauding from his seat in the imperial box hostile criticisms passed by Conservative speakers upon the policy of his father's advisers. When two days later the Prince

attended one of the large entertainment halls of Berlin he received from the audience of ten thousand people a turbulent ovation which showed how strongly the Chauvinistic spirit had infected the unthinking populace, and proved that by his action in the Diet, wholly irregular as it was, he had not unfaithfully reflected the inflammatory public opinion of the moment.

France, on the other hand, was well content with the settlement, and the cession of Congo territory in consideration of a consolidated North-west African empire caused in that country no serious heart-burning. It was evident, indeed, that throughout the negotiations the British Government, perhaps not knowing the full extent of the French commitments to Germany on the subject of compensation from 1905 forward, had taken the question far more tragically than the French themselves. The equity of the agreement was frankly admitted by leading French statesmen at the time. M. de Selves, the Foreign Minister, stated in the Chamber (December 14, 1911):

" Germany said to us, 'All right, we agree – take Morocco, and establish your protectorate there. But as you have bargained with England, with Italy, and with Spain, on what other basis will you treat with us? German public opinion will not tolerate that we should not obtain elsewhere compensation for the renunciation which we are about to make in your favour and our promise to assist you by our diplomacy in obtaining the ratification by the Powers of the agreement we have concluded.'"

"Could we affect to ignore the efforts of Germany in Morocco for half a century," said M. Deschanel, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, "the travels of her explorers, the activity of her colonists, her agricultural and mining enterprises, her steamship lines, her post offices, and especially that movement of ideas which gravitated towards the Shereefian Empire?"

The confession of that standpoint by France completed Germany's case for compensation, but inferentially it carried condemnation of the policy pursued in 1904. It will be the task of later historians to attempt, with fuller knowledge of the facts, to decide whether the settlement which was concluded under compulsion in 1911 would not have been practicable, on the same or an equivalent basis, seven years before, and to determine to what extent the international discords of the intervening and later years might have been averted or mitigated

had the authors of the convention of 1904, so excellent in intention, shown greater prescience.

With the signature of the Franco-German agreement of 1911 the Morocco question was regarded, from the diplomatic standpoint, as closed. Outside the world of Cabinets and Chancelleries, however, little satisfaction or assurance was derived from an arrangement which had originated in the heated atmosphere created by national jealousies and resentments. The part taken in the transaction by Great Britain increased her unpopularity in Germany, since it was held to confirm the suspicion of hostile motives which had long been attributed to her by the Colonial and Pan-Germanist parties, who in justification of their attitude pointed to the fact that on the whole no Continental Power had so little obstructed, or shown a desire to obstruct, British expansion and British foreign interests generally as Germany. There had been a progressive estrangement between the two countries since 1910. During the summer of that year the rumour was again circulated in Germany that the British navy meditated an attack, and baseless and ludicrous though it was, there was a revival of it in the autumn. The prevailing nervousness was increased by a speech made by the Emperor at Hamburg in August, in which he appealed again for national sacrifice in the interest of a larger navy, so that “we may be sure that no one can dispute the place in the sun which is our right.”

The end of the Morocco episode left Anglo-German relations worse than at the beginning, worse, indeed, than they had been since the colonial disputes of 1884 and 1885, and substantially the friction was due to the same cause. While British Ministers were conscious only of having done a good turn to a friendly Power, Germany reproached them with having deliberately connived at the violation of the Treaty of Algeciras, and even their own agreement of 1904, by which France explicitly undertook not to disturb the political independence of Morocco, and with having baulked a justifiable attempt to assert that sanctity of international obligations upon which British statesmen were never weary of insisting. It was difficult to rebut these accusations altogether, for there was in them just sufficient truth to make not a few moderate people in England feel uncomfortable under the criticism. These were ready to admit that Morocco was bound to come to France sooner or later, and that there was no reason in the

world why Great Britain should not have assisted in that reasonable solution of a century-old problem. What they chiefly criticized was their Government's failure seven years before to make allowance for German sentiment and claims. If, it was argued, the British Government and its advisers were satisfied that Germany had no designs on Moroccan territory, there could have been no objection to bringing her into the agreements of 1904. If, on the other hand, they suspected such designs, the case for inviting her co-operation was doubly strong, since to ignore her was deliberately to seek misunderstandings and hand to the future an inevitable legacy of difficulty and danger.

In one respect, however, German strictures upon Great Britain were singularly out of place. For the country which was held to have endeavoured to throw obstacles in the way of Germany's economic advancement had been the first to proclaim the doctrine of commercial equality in all parts of the world. It was forgotten at the time that whenever Germany had knocked at the doors of British colonies these doors had been opened to her on equal terms with the mother country, and that if many countries were now guarding their markets more jealously then heretofore, it was Germany which had set the example by the pursuance of a policy of extreme protection.

The support which had been given to France so openly and ungrudgingly by the British Government in the course of the final negotiations over Morocco led to renewed discussions in both countries as to the precise character of the *entente cordiale*. Was it merely a friendly understanding, as had always been maintained, or an alliance *sans phrase?* Was the support promised by England to France merely moral and not at all material, merely diplomatic and not military? Or were there behind the agreement mutual obligations of a graver and more engrossing nature? It was not the first time that questions of this kind had been asked. Two years after the conclusion of the agreement the French Government had been challenged in the Chamber of Deputies to say frankly whether it had a military significance or not. Asked on November 20th, 1906, to state "Yes" or "No" to the question whether a military convention with England existed, M. Clemenceau, then new to office, replied: "I should be the most embarrassed man in the world if I had to reply to you 'Yes' or 'No.' All I can say is that I do not think that any such convention

exists." Formally, perhaps, there was none, yet the responsibility undertaken by Great Britain as an obligation of honour for the security of the northern coast of France and her own withdrawal of ships of war from the Mediterranean, where France was now acting as guardian of the interests of both Powers, were regarded as indications that behind the *entente* was an understanding, not less definite because implied only and not as yet put into writing, that the two Powers had for practical purposes pooled their military and naval resources. Early in 1911 (February 2nd) the question was raised again in the French Senate in a more direct manner. The statement then made by M. Pichon, Foreign Minister, was not explicit, but the impression which it conveyed was unmistakable.

The fact was disclosed later that during the British general election of December, 1905-January, 1906, when the Algeciras conference was meeting, the French Government, alarmed by the development of the Morocco question and by the possibility of further German pressure, asked the British Foreign Secretary whether, in the event of France being attacked by Germany, Great Britain would be prepared to give her not only naval but military assistance, the idea being that British troops should co-operate in resisting a German invasion across the Belgian frontier. On that occasion Sir Edward Grey gave both the French and German ambassadors to understand that it was his belief that, in view of the cordial relations which had sprung up under the Anglo-French *entente*, the British nation would not wish to stand aside if France, owing to no fault of her own, were to be threatened by her neighbour. Thereupon the French Government pressed for a more definite and substantial pledge of assistance in the contingency named, and suggested formal conversations on the subject. The members of the Cabinet were at the time scattered about the country, and a collective reply to this proposal was impossible. The Foreign Secretary conferred, however, with the Premier (Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman), the Secretary for War (Mr. Haldane), and the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Asquith), and with their concurrence the desired conversations were authorized, subject to the condition that the Government and Parliament retained complete liberty of action. From that time forward systematic conferences between military and naval experts on both sides were held, in which the contingency of armed co-operation was discussed and planned for.

After the Agadir crisis and the resulting second Franco- German agreement, the two Governments concluded that the time had come for putting into definite and documentary form the understanding which hitherto has rested upon more or less informal negotiations. In a letter addressed to M. Paul Cambon on November 29, 1912, Sir Edward Grey recalled how the French ambassador had once remarked that "if either Government had grave reason to expect an unprovoked attack by a third Power, it might become essential to know whether it could in that event depend on the armed assistance of the other." Developing this thought, the British Foreign Secretary "agreed that such a contingency would call for discussion as to whether the two Governments should act together to prevent aggression and to preserve peace, and if so, what measures they would be prepared to take in common." "If these measures involved action," he added, "the plans of the General Staffs would at once be taken into consideration and the Governments would then decide what effect should be given to them." M. Cambon confirmed the arrangement suggested in this letter, and so the matter appears to have rested. While no formal military convention was even then concluded, it is none the less clear that, unknown to the world at large, or even to the Parliaments concerned, the *entente* had already become in substance a defensive alliance, needing only the occurrence of certain well-understood conditions in order to become at once effective. No one was more energetic in directing the *entente* into this practical, and perhaps inevitable, channel than M. Paul Cambon while acting as French ambassador in London. He received ready sympathy and response from the permanent Ministers-without-portfolio of the Foreign Office, but it was his own unwearying persistence and clear consciousness of aim that chiefly succeeded in making the Anglo-French accord what he, and M. Delcassé before him, always intended that it should be, a union of arms as well as of hearts.

German opinion, official as well as public, had already arrived at that conclusion in the early days of the *entente*, whose developments on the military and naval sides, from 1905 onwards, were no secret to the Berlin Foreign Office. From the outset the nation, and later the Government, persisted in viewing the cordial concert first of two and then of three Powers as a measure deliberately aimed against Germany. To English people this suspicion appeared irrational and

unjustifiable. From the moment that the Anglo-French agreement of 1904 was concluded British statesmen had spoken of it as a step on the way to a wider European understanding. Lord Lansdowne, the co-author of the agreement, made this object clear at the time, when he said that "friendship with one Power did not mean hostility to others." Recalling the genesis of the entente at a later date (1911), he stated that "If the Government of that time (1904.) had any one aspiration which they cherished particularly, it was that the agreement with France should be the precursor of other agreements with other Powers," and that "the whole policy of the late Government was quite inconsistent with the idea of coming to an agreement with France which should exclude the possibility of agreements with other Powers or which should divide other European Powers into hostile camps."

Amongst British Liberals in particular the hope was entertained that an agreement with Germany on the same lines would be one of the earliest results of the new diplomatic departure. It was in this spirit that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the Liberal leader, said (November 16, 1905), just before the formation of his first and only Government: "Our stock of good feeling and international good-will is not exhausted by France. Let us hope that this wise policy may be extended. There is the great empire of Russia, and again there is Germany." Under Lord Lansdowne's successor at the Foreign Office the Anglo-French accord, owing to the pressure of events for which Germany herself was not free from responsibility, gradually assumed a character more intimate and less exclusively diplomatic than may have been originally intended. Nevertheless, the policy of the four consecutive Liberal Governments which dated from December, 1905, was a consistent attempt to adhere to the maxim of Sir Edward Grey, who had charge of foreign affairs in each Cabinet: "Separate diplomatic groups need not necessarily be opposing diplomatic groups." Not less than his predecessor he endeavoured to the last to prevent the Powers of the Triple Entente and of the Triple Alliance from falling into a relationship of hopeless antagonism.

However obvious this view of the case might be to English minds, however, the German nation, judging it from its own standpoint, with other preconceptions, and a fixed bias towards suspicion, came to a different conclusion, and it may perhaps be claimed that, considered quite subjectively, one interpretation of the facts, so far as they were

known, was as tenable as the other. Against all the assurances of the Entente Powers that their association was entirely free from an unfriendly, still less an aggressive, purpose Germany set the fact that throughout the Morocco controversy from 1905 forward the British Foreign Office had made it clear that its influence must be regarded as wholly pledged to the support of France and French interests.

Moreover, on the part of France at least these assurances were at best formal and diplomatic, and they could not possibly have been otherwise. To her the *entente* had first been welcome because of the sense of relief and confidence which it gave her. France wanted peace, but it would be doing an injustice to the spirit of that proud nation, still as unreconciled as ever to the loss of her eastern frontier territories, to suppose that she any longer thought of war with the former reluctance and dread.

Shortly after the visit of a British squadron to Brest in the summer of 1905 M. Delcassé, when in a position of less responsibility and greater freedom, for he had ceased to be Foreign Minister, spoke openly of the defensive significance and value of the *entente*. "Of what importance," he asked, "would the young navy of Germany be in the event of war, in which England, let me tell you, would assuredly be with us against Germany? What would become of Germany's ports, of her trade, of her mercantile marine? It would be annihilation for them. That is what will be the significance of the visit, *preparée et calculée,* of the British squadron at Brest, while the return visit of the French squadron to Portsmouth will complete the demonstration." To that utterance, since it came from one of the authors of the *entente,* an importance was attributed which was probably not justified, yet the alarm which it excited in Germany was genuine and natural. It was a French Senator, Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, who, speaking for his own country, said at a later date: "That the *entente* was perverted by being made to appear anti-German is beyond question"; and men so dissimilar in political views as M. Ribot and M. Jaurès publicly endorsed that opinion. Reports from Belgian diplomatic representatives to their Government, published since the war, show that the same idea was entertained in quarters friendly to the *entente* Powers.

For a time, indeed, Great Britain's more intimate relations with France undoubtedly exercised a steadying influence in Paris, just as

Russia's close alliance had done already. As the Morocco misunderstanding increased, however, passions on both sides of the Rhine rose to a temperature never reached since the climax of the Boulanger episode more than twenty years before. For if in France the idea of *revanche*, which all the world believed to have been abandoned, was again discussed with the old freedom and vehemence, there were not wanting in Germany corresponding currents of feeling which did not stop short at mere vituperation. To the Chauvinists there the thought of having suffered diplomatic humiliation at the hands of a nation which once had been compelled to ask mercy of the German sword was intolerable. With a crude virulence that wounded to the quick the pride and honour of a singularly sensitive people, these men did their utmost to stimulate national hatred of France and to inflame the desire to meet and abase her again on the battlefield.

To regard as phantoms, therefore, Germany's suspicion of a plot for her political isolation and her belief that the *entente* was a direct challenge to the Triple Alliance, and to her in particular, does not imply that her apprehensions, if groundless, altogether lacked justification. In political life it is not intentions, but facts and effects, that count, and upon these alone history has to pass judgment. "Never mind what were your intentions," Mr. Disraeli told the Government of Lord Palmerston as he probed the causes which led the Hindoos into mutiny, "the question is what were *their* thoughts, what were *their* inferences?" Nothing that is known of the inner history of the Triple Entente and of the events in which it played a part down to the summer of 1914 can be held to justify even the assumption that its purpose was to harass, thwart, and ultimately to isolate Germany. This, however, was the belief entertained almost universally in that country, and it cannot reasonably be denied that there were facts and appearances which must have made the belief easy for a suspicious Government and a nervous nation. It is not likely that further light upon the subject will weaken this conclusion.

Just before the closing of the Morocco question Germany came to an understanding with Russia concerning the Bagdad Railway project. In November, 1910, the Czar visited the Emperor at Potsdam, and as a result there was concluded in the following year an agreement which, without prejudice to existing alliances and obligations, brought the two countries into line in regard both to this project and to their

future relations in Asia Minor and Persia generally. Russia withdrew objection to the railway and agreed to its being linked on to the lines which she proposed to build in North Persia, while Germany undertook to recognize Russia's special position in that region subject to the concession of equal trading facilities. Speaking in the Diet of the result of the meeting (December 10th), the Chancellor said that the two Powers had exchanged assurances that they would enter into no combinations of an aggressive character, and would maintain the *status quo* in the Balkans and the Near East generally, while the Emperor in private conversation hazarded the opinion that the Franco-Russian alliance was by no means so secure as it had been represented. Out of Germany, however, no great expectations were built upon the Potsdam agreement so far as the European relationships of the two Powers were concerned. Soberly considered, all it proved was that they were willing to come to terms in regard to external questions involving on neither side vital interests; the main lines of their foreign policies were unaffected.

The year 1912 will be remembered as a year fateful for the relations of Germany to Great Britain. The violence of the anti-British and anti-French outbreak just before was a signal of danger not to be lightly disregarded, for it was symptomatic of the existence of pent-up forces hostile to peace, which were capable at any time of passing beyond control. For a long time systematic endeavours had been made by the military and naval leagues, by means of countless meetings, the free use of the Press, and a large inflammatory literature, to indoctrinate in the public mind the theory of so-called "preventive warfare." The idea that the State, if it believed war to be inevitable, was justified in anticipating the purpose and preparations of its enemies, and taking the initiative as soon as circumstances seemed propitious, was not new in Prussian history. Moltke was the most conspicuous modern representative of the doctrine, and on two notable occasions he had been willing to apply it.

The first occasion was in 1867 during the Luxemburg dispute, when, believing that a collision between Prussia and France must come sooner or later, he wished to precipitate it on that issue while the military situation was still altogether in Prussia's favour. Bismarck refused to incur responsibility for so direct a challenge to fate. "The personal conviction of a ruler or a statesman, however well founded,"

he wrote at the time, “that war would eventually occur could not justify its promotion. Unforeseen events might alter the situation and avert what seemed inevitable.” The second occasion was in 1875, when, as has been shown, the great strategist so seriously considered the expediency of forcing a new war upon the same nation before it had fully recovered from the defeat of 1870-1. With this design the Imperial Chancellor was supposed to sympathize; it is more probable that his apparent toleration of it. up to a certain point was intended as a warning to the French Government that it would do well to steady the firebrands who were at work to the west, no less than the cast, of the Rhine at that time.

In later years Bismarck condemned the policy of “preventive warfare” in uncompromising terms, defining it on one occasion as a policy of “suicide in apprehension of death.” More accurately it might be defined as one of murder in apprehension of assault. From the first decade of the new century this policy had been preached with fervour by the militarist party, particularly of Prussia, and in a country in which public opinion looks so much for guidance to the Government the danger of such propagandism for war was all the more insidious owing to the fact that it seldom received official rebuke. Open incitements to war for the purpose of territorial conquest, disparagements of peace as debasing for a great nation, confident assurances that the French and British were effeminate and decadent peoples, whose conquest was in the order of nature and history, with much ugly talk of “trials of strength” (*Machtproben*), a phrase of evil omen for industrial as well as political relations, were the usual substance of this agitation. The entire episode forms a remarkable passage in the modern cultural life of Germany for which a parallel will be vainly sought in earlier times. Nevertheless, the idea that the people of Germany as a whole, or even in large part, were at that time bent on war is a legend of later origin, and as such may be dismissed. On the one hand, only a few responsible leaders of public opinion or men of political and social influence took seriously the intemperate oratory of the military party, still less of the Pan-Germanists. On the other hand, among the active and vocal friends of peace were many influential statesmen and diplomatists, prominent spokesmen of the Protestant Church, and representatives of scholarship and science of international reputation. The foremost leaders of industry, commerce,

and finance in general had no stronger wish than for continued tranquillity, well aware that war, even if waged successfully, would check and throw back indefinitely the pacific conquest of the world's markets which Germany had been pursuing with unwearying zest and growing success for a generation. The democratic parties were unanimous and emphatic in their zeal for international concord in every direction; and behind the peace movement was a large and powerful Press, comprising many newspapers and reviews, both metropolitan and provincial, which ranked amongst the most influential in Germany.

So far as the attitude towards Great Britain in particular was concerned, while the idea of war with that country was undoubtedly abhorrent to the mass of the German people, there was yet a distinct and deepening consciousness of alienation, and – so faithful is human nature to itself – this alienation followed, in the main, the same social and political line of cleavage which divided the British nation in its attitude towards Germany. For suspicion and ill-feeling existed by no means on one side only; if in Germany there was a strong Anglophobist party, represented by the soldiers and the higher bureaucrats, with a sprinkling of intellectuals and industrialists, and in political life by the Conservatives generally, there was also in England an anti-German party, no less strong or irreconcilable, recruited predominantly, yet with many distinguished exceptions, from the same elements in the population. In England at least – in Germany never – the old colonial quarrels were well-nigh forgotten, and even the grudge against Germany as a too successful commercial rival was dying down as her manufacturers and merchants, rousing themselves to more earnest efforts, were finding that while much trade might have been lost there was still far more to be gained. Yet suspicion and distrust was widespread; if in Germany there was a settled belief that England was thwarting her legitimate desires for expansion, in England there was a growing apprehension as to the purpose and issue of her rival's naval projects.

A desire to open the way for friendlier relations was shown by the Emperor early in the year, when he invited the British Cabinet to send to Berlin a special envoy of authoritative position to discuss with his Ministers questions of common interest. The invitation was accepted with good-will, and the delicate mission was entrusted to Lord

Haldane, the only British statesman of his generation who can be said to have seriously studied Germany and to have brought to his study the sympathy without which it is impossible to enter into the mind and understand the point of view of another nation.

Lord Haldane had already visited Berlin officially as Secretary for War in September, 1906, and had on that occasion been afforded the opportunity of examining the organization of the German army and particularly the War Office and General Staff, an exceptional privilege which he used with great and lasting advantage to his own country. His second official visit was made early in February, 1912. In the course of his three days' sojourn he met the Emperor and his principal Ministers, as well as the heads of the army and navy, and the frank exchange of views which took place on that occasion was reported at the time to have cleared up much obscurity and suspicion and eased the prevailing tension all round. Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg told the Diet just afterwards (February 15th): "The exchange of views, which was heartily welcomed on our side, took place in numerous conversations of an exhaustive and frank character and will be continued"; while Mr. Asquith said in the House of Commons (February 14th): "The anticipation that good would result from a free exchange of views has been realized. It has dispelled the suspicion that either Government contemplates aggressive designs against the other."

If the immediate practical results were not as substantial as Lord Haldane desired, it was not due to lack of either clear aims or effort on his part. He was able to satisfy the German Chancellor of the pacific disposition of the British Government, and his assurance that it had no agreements with France and Russia except those that were in writing and published to the world at once cleared the ground for the discussion of the possible basis of an accord which should supplement, and perhaps comprehend, the existing Anglo-French and Anglo-Russian *ententes*, to the advantage of all the four Powers. The objects of the negotiations were not precisely defined, nor was it contemplated that binding understandings or pledges should then be given or asked on either side. The visit of the British envoy was, in effect, a voyage of discovery, an endeavour to survey the ground, take stock of the political situation in Berlin, estimate the genuineness of the conciliatory advances which had been made there, and ascertain

in what directions, and within what limits, cordial co-operation between the two countries might be possible.

The sincerity of the German Chancellor's desire for a friendly understanding was not open to question, and his assertion that reconciliation with Great Britain had been "the dream of his official life" was consistent with all his known actions on that occasion. He first put forward as the basis of an agreement a formula which recalled the rejected unconditional neutrality proposal of 1909. On examination this formula broke down before Lord Haldane's objection that an unconditional promise that neither of the two Powers would enter into a combination directed against the other might prove unworkable in certain possible, though in practice hardly conceivable, circumstances. Thus Germany, for example, would presumably feel herself bound to intervene in the event of British attack upon some Power whose independence was to her vital interest, just as Great Britain would wish to have complete freedom of action in the same circumstances. Moreover, the formula proposed would have allowed Germany to fulfil to the fullest extent her existing liabilities to her allies, while it would have prevented Great Britain, because unbound by formal alliances, from giving help to her friends of the *entente*.

Recognizing that any pledge of neutrality must be consistent with fidelity to all existing obligations towards third Powers, Lord Haldane suggested reciprocal undertakings against aggressive or unprovoked attacks and hostile combinations, military or naval agreements and plans, as giving to Germany every reasonable guarantee, while at the same time respecting Great Britain's engagements, which were declared to be en tirely free from hostile purpose against Germany or any other Power. A formula was accordingly elaborated on these lines. In its final form it would have bound the two Powers to declare that neither of them would make any unprovoked attack upon the other or join in any combination or design against the other for purposes of aggression, or become party to any plan or naval or military combination, alone or in conjunction with any other Power, directed to such an end; that if either of the contracting parties became involved in a war in which it could not be said to be the aggressor, the other was at least to observe a benevolent neutrality towards it and endeavour to localize the conflict; yet that such duty of neutrality should not apply in so far as it might not be reconcilable with existing

agreements with other Powers, and in conformity with this provision the making of new agreements which might render it impossible for either of the contracting Powers to observe neutrality towards the other beyond the limitations above stated was to be excluded.

All these undertakings, however, were of a negative order, and directed to the statement of the conditions upon which the two Powers should or should not be entitled to wage war in given contingencies rather than to positive measures for the preservation of peace. Perhaps the most statesmanlike feature of the proposed agreement was the provision that the two Powers should undertake for the future to exchange views upon all questions which might arise between them with a view to bringing about a solution conformable with their respective interests, and that each Power should make use of its good relations to third Powers in order to influence the relations of the other Power to such third Powers in a friendly sense. It was suggested that the agreement should be concluded first for ten years, and thereafter continue automatically by mutual consent.

The adoption of a conditional neutrality formula, however, was only a step – though an important step – on the way to an agreement. All that had been done so far was to prepare a design for the desired temple of peace, but before the actual work of building could begin the foundations had still to be laid. It was here that the first and real difficulties in the way of an understanding were encountered. Now, as three years ago, Germany was eager to have a political agreement, but failed to appreciate sufficiently the importance from the British standpoint of a concurrent naval agreement. The political ententes between Great Britain and France and Russia were not based upon formal professions of good-will, but had resulted naturally from the removal of certain outstanding causes of friction; the contracting Powers had been reconciled because there was no longer any reason for their estrangement. It was Lord Haldane's hope to establish the new *entente* on the same basis, and for him the question upon which the relaxation of the existing tension was most urgently desired was obviously that of naval rivalry.

In order to understand how this question stood at the time, it is necessary to take up the threads of the story of the naval overtures at the point at which it was left in an earlier chapter (pp. 380-4). Prince von Bülow resigned the Chancellorship in July, 1909, and with the

appointment of Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg as his successor a better future seemed to open for the official relations of the two countries. Judged by his actions, Bülow must be regarded as having been at best a lukewarm friend of Anglo-German concord. He was no doubt unwilling that the growing coolness between the two countries should be allowed to develop into a formal alienation; but while he was profuse in fair speeches, he made no serious attempt to avert such a misfortune. In particular he was not prepared to make any concession which could abate the increasing naval rivalry, while to general disarmament proposals he would not listen. His written confessions as given to the world in 1913, and with greater frankness three years later, throw an unfavourable light upon his attitude in regard to more than one episode which brought the two nations into conflict, and suggest doubt whether his concern for international conciliation went deeper than his political convictions generally.

The new Chancellor took an early opportunity of affirming his desire for a better understanding, and his advances were cordially reciprocated in London. Pressed by the Diet in December, 1910, to disclose his views on the subject, he admitted that the idea of limiting naval armaments had repeatedly been suggested by England, but added that before such a thing could be considered the nations would need to be friendlier disposed towards each other. Renewed advances led Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg to make a definite offer of a more or less speculative character. It was that Germany, without curtailing, would agree to retard her naval programme, provided Great Britain would enter into an undertaking that neither of them should attack or take part in acts of aggression against each other, while in the event of either of them being involved in a war with a third Power or a group of Powers the other would remain neutral. For the British Government such a pledge of absolute neutrality was an arrangement so one-sided and so inconsistent with the spirit of the *entente* with France and Russia, the character of which Germany well knew, that it never had the slightest prospect of acceptance.

Nevertheless, intermittent discussions on the naval question continued for some time, though without reaching a basis that promised real success. A temporary retardation of the German shipbuilding programme was again suggested in Berlin, but while still under consideration this proposal was abruptly withdrawn in 1911 on

the plea that its adoption would prove injurious to the shipbuilding industry. Once more also the international situation afforded little encouragement to the friends of conciliation on either side. The relations between Germany and France were becoming more strained, for the Morocco dispute was entering its last and acutest phase. It was in July, 1911, that the climax of this dispute came with the incident of Agadir. Thus the hope of an understanding seemed to become more remote. There had been no lack of effort on the British side and no lack of friendly assurances on the German; what had been wanting was the determination to sweep difficulties out of the way and face the hard realities of the situation.

So the *impasse* on the naval question remained at the time of the Berlin conversations of February, 1912. Recognizing that this question was the essential cause of estrangement between the two countries, and that unless agreement could be reached here there could be little or no hope of agreement in other directions, Lord Haldane endeavoured to bring home to the German Chancellor the futility of a policy of naval rivalry which promised to involve both countries in illimitable expenditure, without changing their relative strength. His work was made the more difficult by the fact that at the very moment a new Navy Bill was about to be introduced in the Diet, though when he went to Berlin he knew about its contents only as much as the world in general, viz. that more battleships and cruisers were to be added to the programme of construction and important changes in the organization of the navy introduced. For whereas the active battle fleet had hitherto consisted of two squadrons, leaving two squadrons in reserve, a third active squadron was now to be formed, with a view to the greater part of the navy being henceforth maintained in permanent commission, ready at any moment for war.

There was a transparent inconsistency in the two Powers making mutual protestations of a desire for concord, and giving undertakings against aggressive designs, while at the same time Germany was increasing her navy and by implication inviting Great Britain to do the same thing. Lord Haldane, therefore, suggested that if the German shipbuilding programme could not be curtailed it might at least be spread over a longer period – say twelve years or more, instead of six years as was intended. The Chancellor was convinced and ready to come to terms. It soon became clear, however, that the only Minister

known to the imperial constitution was not master in his own house, but that above him on this question was the Emperor, and above the Emperor was the Naval Secretary of State.

Not the least important result of Lord Haldane's visit to Berlin was the confirmation which it afforded of the fact – suspected long before – that, alike in military and naval matters, two parties were contending for influence with the Emperor, one a party of moderation and peace, represented by the Chancellor and some at least of his civilian colleagues, wishful and even eager for the friendship of Great Britain, and ready to pay a fair price for it, the other unconciliatory, disposed to let matters go their own way, and indifferent, to say the least, whether the end were open rupture or not. To the latter party belonged Admiral von Tirpitz, who already was believed to cherish the hope of changing the Admiralty for the Chancellery. In the further discussion of this question the Emperor and his chief naval adviser took the lead out of the Chancellor's hands. The Emperor urgently wanted a peace agreement, but he wanted just as urgently a large navy, and one inclination neutralized the other. To Tirpitz a large navy was the supreme consideration, – he had worked and lived for twenty years for the realization of this ambition – and in comparison with it peace formulas were of little consequence. He even challenged the British two-Power standard of naval supremacy as one which Germany could not accept, only to be told that Germany had never been asked to accept it, yet that it none the less represented for Great Britain a principle of self- preservation as automatic and inexorable as any that Germany might claim to apply to her own military strength. The fact that Tirpitz was the real stumbling-block in the way of an agreement on the naval question was not disguised by the Chancellor.

Nevertheless, the idea of retardation seemed to find favour, and it was ultimately understood that while any agreement that might result would not define a standard ratio of naval power, or indeed refer specifically to shipbuilding, if a political agreement were concluded the German Government would modify its naval programme according to the altered conditions, spreading construction over a longer period. It was stated later by a German publicist, to whom the confidences of the February conversations were revealed from the German side, that as a result of Lord Haldane's persuasions four battleships were dropped from the new shipbuilding programme.

In relation to another open problem, that of the still unfinished Bagdad Railway, practical progress was made, and only developments in the international situation, entirely unforeseen in 1912, prevented a later solution as part of a formal territorial agreement which would have been at least as important and far-reaching in its way as the Anglo-French and Anglo-Russian agreements of 1904 and 1907 respectively. Here, again, regard for the sequence of events makes necessary a brief retrospect. During the earlier phases of the Bagdad Railway controversy the question had not been viewed on either side as an occasion of legitimate grievance, but had been treated purely as an affair of business bargaining. As has been shown, Germany had the concessions, and Great Britain believed herself to have in reserve a power of veto which might in case of need make the concessions, if not inoperative, at least of far less value than they seemed to be. The long protraction of the dead-lock, however, had in the end, as was inevitable, provoked untoward consequences. Concurrently with the refusal of Great Britain to accept the project without such modifications as seemed necessary in order to safeguard her special and ancient interests in Asia Minor and the Persian Gulf, the German promoters began to give a disquieting prominence to its political and military aspects, and even to the hostile and aggressive possibilities which it held in store. Gradually a large Bagdad Railway literature sprang up as part of the active propagandism of Pan-Germanism, and a host of publicists and politicians, putting the economic aspects of the question in the background, now based its chief claims to support upon its value as a menace to British rule in Egypt and eventually in India.

Five years before (November, 1907) the first serious advance towards an agreement was made on the occasion of the German Emperor's visit to England. Meeting the Emperor at Windsor, Lord Haldane, then Secretary of State for War, had at his invitation stated plainly what the British Government wanted – it was, he said, a "gate" to protect India from troops coming down the new railway to the Gulf, and he explained that only the complete control of the terminal section of the railway would afford this protection. "I will give you the gate," the Emperor had then said. He went further, for with the acquiescence of his Foreign Minister (Herr von Schön) and his War Minister (General von Einem), who were with him in England, he

agreed to the further condition, proposed by the British Foreign Office, that France and Russia should both be brought into the agreement. Nevertheless, the hope of a satisfactory settlement which had thus been created so suddenly was just as abruptly shattered. Prince Bülow, the Chancellor, had not been consulted, and no sooner did the imperial negotiators return to Berlin than it was discovered that the idea of including two other Powers in an Anglo-German convention was impracticable. It is not clear that, even from the British standpoint, their inclusion was essential. There could be no question of either country sharing with Great Britain the special position which was to be secured to her in respect of the Bagdad section of the railway and the Gulf. Russia, indeed, by the Anglo-Russian convention of the preceding August, had already agreed to recognize her controlling position in the Gulf, and the vital interests of France lay in other parts of Asia Minor. Whether the quadruple arrangement was necessary or not, Bülow's reason for objecting to it can only be conjectured. He may have been opposed to the basis of the compromise itself and have made the proposal to associate with it both France and Russia an excuse for thwarting it. It is at least as probable, however, that he was suspicious of the idea of negotiating with the three Entente Powers together owing to unwillingness to give to the *entente* the formal recognition which such action would involve and hence to create a precedent which might prove inconvenient on later occasions. Whether cause or only pretext, however, the attempt of the Triple Entente to negotiate as a sort of diplomatic *consortium* upon a question which had become one of international politics had the effect of delaying a settlement which was highly desirable in the interest of all parties concerned and became the more urgent the nearer the railway approached Bagdad.

Early in 1911 the promoters of the project made a new agreement with the Ottoman Government under which they secured a further financial guarantee, to meet the continuation of the line to Bagdad, while, on the other hand, they agreed to renounce their concession in respect of the section from that town to the Gulf on condition that in the capital of the new company to be formed for its construction they should be allowed to participate to at least the same extent as any other foreign group. Whatever the disadvantage for Germany of this new agreement, the condition attached to it did not seem to increase

the chances that Great Britain would succeed in securing the "gate" at the Gulf end of the line which had been promised to her in 1907. Nor was the British position improved by the fact that just before this Russia, for whose sake (with that of France) Great Britain had risked the "gate" arrangement, had concluded an agreement of her own with Germany – the Potsdam Agreement of November, 1910 – under which she undertook not to put further obstacles in the way of the construction of the railway, though it is true that the two Powers disagreed later as to the precise extent of this commitment, Russia contending that it was limited to the line as far as Bagdad, Germany that it related to the complete project.

On the other hand, it was a gain from the British standpoint that Turkey had been released from the original concession and was now again to some extent a free agent. Accordingly, the London Foreign Office made renewed efforts to obtain from the Porte some practical recognition of Great Britain's claim to control of the Bagdad-Gulf section of the line and to supreme influence on the Gulf itself, even considering as an alternative the building of a second railway from Bagdad forward. Neither with Turkey nor Germany, however, had an arrangement been reached upon this question in February, 1912.

Now Lord Haldane succeeded in restoring the Bagdad Railway negotiations to the position which they had reached after the *pourparlers* at Windsor in 1907. Subject to the withdrawal of British opposition to the completion of the line (e.g. by withholding sanction to the raising of the Turkish customs duties), and to an undertaking that Germany should participate in any railway schemes projected within the British sphere of influence in Persia, Germany was to renounce in favour of Great Britain her claim to build the Bagdad-Basra (Bassowrah) section of the line and to give full recognition to British interests in the Persian Gulf and South Persia. In proof of such recognition Germany was to assist Great Britain to obtain from Turkey an extensive concession for the Bagdad-Basra section and also a concession for a harbour at Koweit, similar to the concession obtained for a German company at Haidar Pasha. The adjustment of certain colonial questions, including the rounding-off of several territories on both sides, was to have been part of this agreement, Germany receiving concessions in Africa, while giving them in the Pacific. The agreement, in fact, was to have been on Great Britain's part a positive

and practical disproof of Germany's suspicion of her desire to "encircle" an inconvenient rival and thwart its rightful imperialistic aspirations.

What, then, were the immediate results of the notable departure in Anglo-German diplomacy which was made in February, 1912? It would appear to be undisputed that the British peace envoy took away with him from Berlin the assurance that the men who were still in power in Germany cherished no designs against the peace of Europe, yet at the same time that he discovered around the Emperor the play of sinister influences which, though as yet held in check, were sedulously striving for the mastery. The German Empire still was peace in 1912, as the Second French Empire had been until the summer of 1870: it remained to be seen whether the maintenance of peace would prove more certain in the later case than it had proved in the earlier. It followed from his reading of the runes that Great Britain's true policy was to continue to do her utmost to encourage the party of conciliation in Germany, while at the same time strengthening her own military and naval position in view of unforeseen contingencies.

Meanwhile, a new and more intimate *rapport* had been established between two Governments which had for a long time been going more and more apart; their relations had been translated into a warmer and more genial atmosphere; sundry grounds of unrest and friction had been removed, and it seemed as though Germany and Great Britain, like France and Great Britain eight years before, were about to make a new start. It was a happy omen that the conciliatory utterances with which, as has been stated, the British Prime Minister greeted the result of Lord Haldane's visit were warmly re-echoed by the leaders of the Opposition. "If," said Lord Lansdowne, the co-author of the *entente* with France, in the House of Lords on February 14th, "he has come back with anything in the nature of an olive-branch, we shall congratulate him on this side as warmly as he will be congratulated by his friends on the other side of the House." Similarly in the House of Commons Mr. Bonar Law said on the same day: "No man in this House is more anxious for a good understanding with Germany than I am, and no one would regard with more horror a war between this country and Germany."

The "new orientation" was observed with approval by other

countries, and to Russia in particular it appeared to afford unalloyed satisfaction. Even in France, whose ruling statesmen were at first apprehensive, and not a little jealous lest negotiations which begun by aiming merely at a *détente* should end with a too cordial *entente*, all anxiety disappeared as soon as it was understood that there had never been a question of Great Britain's unconditional neutrality and that no agreement had been proposed or contemplated by her or on her behalf which would in the slightest degree weaken the accord of 1904 or diminish the obligations which had grown up under it.

From the German nation likewise the peace movement in that year won a notable endorsement in the issue of the general elections to the Imperial Diet. Morocco and imperialism played a prominent part at the hustings and the polling booths. While, on the one hand, the Pan-Germanists, with the Conservative parties in collaboration, made a strong attempt to arouse in the nation an aggressive and warlike temper, the popular parties, and particularly the Social Democrats, comprehending the great mass of the working classes, directly challenged the Chauvinism which had so recently brought the country to the verge of war and appealed to the nation chiefly upon this issue. The results of the elections, as shown by the voting strength of parties, indicated that the nation endorsed rather than resented the Government's refusal to play with fire, for while the Conservatives lost a little ground, the Progressives gained over a quarter of a million votes and the Social Democrats nearly twice that number.

After Lord Haldane's return to London the negotiations which he had begun passed into the hands of the Foreign Office, between which and the German ambassador, Count Metternich, friendly conversations took place for some time. The formula for a political agreement which had been drawn up tentatively in Berlin seemed to afford complete satisfaction to neither side. After new proposals had been considered without result, the British Foreign Secretary suggested an agreement by which Great Britain was to declare that she would neither make nor join in any unprovoked attacks upon Germany, that aggression upon Germany was not the subject and formed no part of any treaty, understanding, or convention to which she was a party, and that she would not participate in any action which had that object in view. Germany, however, once more fell back upon her old demand for unconditional neutrality, and as she was unwilling to depart from this

standpoint, agreement proved impossible.

Nor did further progress towards a naval understanding prove feasible. If during the British envoy's presence in Berlin the large-navy party seemed for a moment to have been overruled, with his departure it recovered courage and influence. Tirpitz had from the first been hostile to the suggestion that his shipbuilding programme should be cut down, and as he had the Emperor's ear, there was never any doubt as to which view would prevail in the end. When Great Britain abandoned the formal application of the two-Power standard in favour of a ratio as regards Germany of sixteen ships to ten, Tirpitz professed to accept the concession as a basis for negotiation, and there seemed again a hope of agreement; but this hope disappeared when the German Naval Minister made it clear that such an arrangement could only be considered as temporary and would not imply any cessation of building, and, further, contended that ships built by the Colonies should be included in the British quota. As the German view of the sixteen to ten formula virtually meant that the two countries should be free to continue building against each other so long as they adhered to an accepted ratio, little was to be gained by it. No greater success attended the suggestion made by the British First Lord of the Admiralty, when introducing the Naval Estimates for 1913, that the two countries should take a "naval holiday"; in other words, should agree to defer for twelve months the new building planned for the coming budget year – in the case of England four ships, in the case of Germany two. At that time the naval expenditure of Germany had already become half as large as that of Great Britain; twenty years before it was not one-quarter.

On the German side Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, unlike his predecessor, was profoundly impressed by the apparent hopelessness of the outlook, and had he had the Emperor's support in his resistance to the Naval Minister's importunacy it is probable that an agreement would have been concluded. But to the Emperor the desire to possess the strongest navy as well as the strongest army in the world had become an absorbing ambition, and however disposed to make concessions he may have been in February, 1912, he changed his mind a year later – a sign that in his counsels a new spirit and temper were in the ascendant. Against the combined opposition to any concession offered, therefore, by two men – the real makers of the

German navy – all efforts at accommodation were shattered. As time passed, bringing the rival naval Powers no nearer to an understanding, it became increasingly clear that the effect of the dead-lock would be that each country would go its own way, and already in 1913 this was tacitly assumed on both sides to be the position. It was not a question of right or wrong, but merely of different views of national interest, which divided them. Where such was the issue neither was entitled to force its views upon the other, and in fact neither made the attempt. Yet in each country the naval controversy to the last left a large party unconvinced that the difficulty was insoluble, and immeasurably distressed that the combined statesmanship of two great nations, which otherwise had so many interests in common, had failed to discover the golden middle way of moderation and reason.

The result of Germany's final refusal to consider a reciprocal restriction in the growth of navies was that Great Britain immediately made an unprecedented increase in her naval estimates. No disquieting pronouncements were made from the housetops, but to preserve an attitude of vigilant preparedness became more than ever before the settled policy of the British Admiralty, and the nation readily accepted the additional burden imposed upon it in consequence without knowing all the facts which were held to justify it. It was in November, 1912, also that the British and French Governments put into definite and documentary form the plans for military and naval co-operation, in the event of an unprovoked attack upon France by Germany, which had been discussed by their experts since 1906.

Inability to agree upon these questions of capital importance did not, however, check at once the movement towards conciliation. In May, 1912, the German Government had reciprocated Lord Haldane's efforts by appointing to the London embassy the ablest man in the German diplomatic service, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, who for the purpose left the scene of his successful labours at Constantinople. Baron Marschall's sudden death, after he had been but a few months in his new home, and the death in the ensuing December of Herr von Kiderlen-Wächter, who had been Foreign Secretary since 1909, and had never belonged to the large-navy party, deprived the cause of reconciliation of two good friends; but their places were taken by Prince Lichnowsky and Herr von Jagow respectively, both men of the

same pacific spirit.

In a memorandum, reviewing the diplomatic relations of the two countries at that time and during the remaining period of his work in London, Prince Lichnowsky has paid a warm tribute to the conciliatory attitude of the Government to which he was accredited. Of the British Foreign Secretary he says: “His intention was not to isolate us, but to make us, so far as possible, partners in a working concern. Just as he had succeeded in bridging Franco-British and Russo-British difficulties, so he wished as far as possible to remove causes of friction between Germany and Great Britain, and by a network of treaties – which would finally include an agreement on the unfortunate naval question – to secure the peace of the world.” A beginning was made with the revision of the treaty of 1898 relating to the Portuguese colonies in Africa. That agreement had been concluded on the supposition that Portugal might soon be disposed to sell her African possessions, and as that contingency had not arisen, their provisions had remained inoperative. While affirming their intention to respect and protect the sovereign rights of Portugal, the two Powers now proposed simply to divide these large and only partially developed territories into spheres of influence for trading purposes. All Angola as far as the 20th degree of longitude and the northern portion of Mozambique were assigned to Germany, whose wishes and interests, on the testimony of her ambassador, received generous consideration, so that the treaty as concluded entirely met her views. Though eventually initialled by the negotiators in August, 1913, the treaty was never signed, for the reason that the German Government declined to agree to its publication and the British Foreign Secretary would not sign except on that condition.

In the course of a speech made in the Diet at the end of the year (December 9th) the Chancellor cordially reciprocated the friendly attitude of Great Britain, and uttered the hope “that the confidence which at present characterizes our relations with the British Government will extend itself to those circles in both countries which still contemplate with a certain scepticism a *rapprochement* of the two kindred nations,” adding: “Let the past be the past; let us continue to work in confidence on the basis which the present offers us!”

It was in this spirit that the two Governments applied themselves anew to the solution of the Bagdad Railway question. If it was to

Germany's interest to close this awkward question, not less was it to the interest of Great Britain, whose supposed veto upon the completion of the scheme had hitherto proved a harmless weapon of defence. In considering the concessions to be offered elsewhere to Germany, therefore, the British Government had to reckon with the fact that the German position in regard to the Bagdad Railway was impregnable. Sir Edward Grey had told the House of Commons (March, 1911): "The time to oppose the Bagdad Railway, if it was to be opposed in British interests, was before the concession was granted." Germany was now in possession of the ground, however, and was able to make good her claims just in the way and to the extent that interest and expediency might dictate.

As the result of long and complicated negotiations an arrangement was eventually arrived at which amounted to the division of Asia Minor into politico-economic spheres of influence, separate areas being assigned to Great Britain, Germany, France, and Russia. The question of sovereignty was not explicitly raised in the resulting treaty. As to the Bagdad Railway in particular, Great Britain now withdrew her claim to participate in the Gulf section of the railway, and it was agreed that her assent to the increase of the Turkish customs dues should be given, subject to conditions intended to secure the continued predominance of British influence on the Gulf. Thus Basra was now to be the terminus of the line, and there was to be no continuation to the open water except with British consent, which meant on British conditions; the ancient British rights of navigation on the rivers of Mesopotamia were to be protected; representation was to be given to Great Britain on the board of the Bagdad Railway Company; and the construction and exploitation of ports at Bagdad and Basra were to be carried out by a separate company, in which Great Britain was to be interested to the extent of 40 per cent. On the other hand, Great Britain undertook not to give support to any railway offering direct competition to the Bagdad line, though this stipulation was not to apply to a railway from Egypt to the Gulf. The Smyrna-Aidin railway zone was also regarded as falling within the British sphere of influence. As a part of this comprehensive bargain German wishes in regard to certain colonial adjustments which had been discussed two years before were to have received considerate treatment, and German writers have since spoken of the British

concessions offered in this connection as meeting all reasonable expectations.

Negotiations with France and Russia having led to a satisfactory agreement – Syria being reserved as the special sphere of French influence and Armenia as that of Russian – all that remained in June, 1914, in order to the completion of the final and crowning Bagdad Railway convention was the settlement of certain points in which Turkey was specially interested. In that month, however, events occurred which changed the entire European situation, and the convention was not signed. Prince Lichnowsky says of the two uncompleted territorial treaties that had they only "been concluded and published an agreement would have been reached with England which would have finally ended all doubt of the possibility of an Anglo-German co-operation." That means that the conciliatory efforts which began in 1912 must be counted among the tragic "too lates" of international diplomacy.

FOREIGN RELATIONS, 1913-1914 - THE LATTER DAYS

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AN ATTEMPT TO REVIEW the history of the last dolorous days, wherein the whole world has seen evil, is attended by disadvantages arising from the fact that some of the capital events of the time either appear in the twilight obscurity in which figures and movements are seen vaguely and uncertainly or are still veiled in total darkness. In such circumstances the completeness which is to be desired in historical narrative is impossible, and upon some questions judgment must be passed with reserve or be altogether suspended.

Before the time reached ominous shadows had fallen upon the European horizon in several directions. Political meteorologists, in accordance with the empirical nature of their science, for the most part turned their gaze to the West. The chronic tension in Germany's relations to France had been increased by the passing of the special Defence Law of 1913, already described, under which fifty million pounds were to be spent at once in the increase of the army and of armaments, a measure to which France and Russia immediately replied with corresponding expenditure on a large though not an equal scale. The situation was also to some extent complicated by uncertainty regarding Italy's future relationship to the Triple Alliance, the prolongation of which had already been discussed by the Governments of Vienna and Rome. It was understood that Italy wished for important modifications, with a view to safeguarding still more securely the status quo in the Balkans and the Mediterranean, but that the choice offered to her was the treaty unchanged or no treaty at all. No one believed that her acceptance of the alliance on what would virtually be forced terms would denote a whole-hearted attachment to the two Empires. On the other hand, the relations between Germany and Austria were never before so cordial and intimate.

Nevertheless, all this time it was in the East that the storm portents were most threatening. Clouds had begun to gather in that quarter before the Morocco difficulties had been adjusted. From the moment that the alliance of the Central Powers was counterbalanced by the Triple Entente it behoved restless statesmen to walk more warily than before, not because the new combination of Powers was intended any more than the old to be one of defiance, but because the equilibrium of political forces had been brought to so fine a point that the slightest disturbance was fraught with danger. All the more inexplicable, therefore, were the motives of Austria when in 1908 she

reopened the Balkan question by a sudden yet carefully premeditated act of aggression, and so openly challenged Russia. In order to appreciate fully the significance of this episode, which marked a turning-point in the development of the Near Eastern question, certain anterior facts must be called to mind.

The association of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in a powerful Jugo-Slavic State, which should revive the power and splendour of the olden days, had long been the dream of the Serbian race. It was plain, however, that the realization of that design would profoundly modify the political situation in the Balkans to Austria's prejudice, and it was in the hope of thwarting it that Austria obtained at the Congress of Berlin the assent of the Powers – given, indeed, from mixed motives – to her occupation and administration, but not annexation, of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and also to her maintenance, in the interest of public order and security, of garrisons and military roads in the region dividing Serbia and Montenegro known as the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar, all three territories remaining under Turkish suzerainty as before. The military occupation of Novi-Bazar was to carry no administrative powers and was to be effected later in agreement with Turkey. Accordingly, in the following year Austria exercised her option in relation thereto. In this way she was able not only to drive a wedge between Serbia and Montenegro and the Adriatic seaboard, but to keep open for herself an avenue to Salonica and the Ægean, the ultimate goal of Habsburg ambitions. These arrangements gave to Austria a larger stake in the Balkans, but they also brought her into more direct conflict with Russia, which the Congress Powers had allowed only to extend a friendly patronage to the new principality of Bulgaria.

Contrary to the intentions of its authors, the Treaty of Berlin, owing to the political and territorial adjustments which it introduced, gave a powerful stimulus to nationalism both amongst the races now freed from and those still subject to Ottoman rule. More apprehensive than ever for the continued cohesion and stability of her own polyethnic empire, Austria henceforth endeavoured to prevent the growth in the Balkans of any powerful concentration of Slavic influence. In particular it was part of her policy to keep Serbia weak, to thwart her political aspirations, and to prevent her from playing the part of a Piedmont in the inflammable South-east of Europe.

The abandonment in 1890 of Bismarck's reinsurance treaty with Russia was not followed by any immediate change in the relations of that Power with Austria. For a few years longer these appeared outwardly to be friendly, and in proof of good intentions the two Emperors in 1897 adopted what was known as the St. Petersburg Agreement binding their Governments to observe the *status quo* in the Balkans. Austria had long wished to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina outright, and sought to obtain Russia's assent as part of that compact, but in view of the Czar's opposition the proposal was withdrawn. In the meantime Alexander III had been succeeded by his son Nicholas II (November, 1894), under whose Foreign Minister, Prince Lobanoff, Russian influence in the Balkans was, after a time of decline, powerfully reasserted. Notably Bulgaria made peace with the Empire to whose care the Powers had committed her in 1878, and in sign of this Prince Ferdinand's eldest son went over to the Orthodox Church in February, 1896, an event which was followed immediately afterwards by the formal recognition of the Prince by the Powers and the Sultan as ruler of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia.

For some time longer both Austria and Russia continued to abstain from aggressive intervention in Balkan affairs, and their repeated injunctions to Serbia and Bulgaria not to disturb the peace proved successful. Count Goluchowski, the Austrian Foreign Minister, was not slow to give the same advice at home. Addressing the Delegations as late as May 7, 1902, when the negotiations for the renewal of the Triple Alliance were in progress, he uttered a grave warning against the "danger of reviving prestige policy in the Balkans." In October of the following year he entered into an arrangement known as the Mürzsteg Programme, whereby the same Powers again agreed to renounce aggressive designs in the Balkans and also pledged support to various measures of reform needful to the tranquillity of the races still subject to Turkish rule. The accession of a new dynasty, that of the Karageorgevitches, following the assassination in June, 1903, of King Alexander and Queen Draga, led to no marked change in the relations of the two Emperors with Serbia, whose new ruler, King Peter, though the nominee of the regicides, was promptly recognized both at St. Petersburg and Vienna.

The first rift in the lute occurred in 1905, when Serbia and Bulgaria concluded a customs union. That measure, signalizing the

end of Serbia's economic dependence upon her powerful neighbour, gave great offence in Vienna, and Goluchowski rashly answered it by tariff reprisals against Serbia, who vigorously responded, with the result of the memorable "Pig War," in which Austria bore the brunt of the incidental inconvenience and injury. The consequence was that Serbia turned more than before to Russia and also formed stronger commercial ties with France, from whom she both borrowed money and bought armaments.

In the following year (October, 1906) Goluchowski was succeeded at the Ballplatz by Baron von Aehrenthal, a man of greater force of character, more ambitious, but both less cautious and less scrupulous. Goluchowski had left Austria's relations with Russia fairly harmonious, and for a time it seemed to be the policy of the new Minister, who had been called to his post from the St. Petersburg embassy, to strengthen, if possible, the ties with that Power. The prospect of an Anglo- Russian reconciliation was already sufficiently serious to alarm him, and the idea occurred to his fertile mind of wrecking the plan which he knew to be maturing by drawing Russia and France together into an understanding with Germany and Austria – Bülow in Berlin was credited with entertaining the same notion – thus effectually isolating Great Britain, a manœuvre to be accounted brilliant if it proved successful, ill-considered and clumsy if it failed. He was even confident enough to hope to re-create a union of the three Empires on the lines of that which was supplanted by the Dual Alliance of 1879 but revived for a time by the Skiernievice conference of 1884, with the difference that Austria instead of Germany was henceforth to take the leading place, and the tables of the law were to be proclaimed no longer from Berlin but from Vienna.

Aehrenthal was clear-sighted enough to perceive that if anything was to be done in that direction it must be done at once. Austria and Russia had, in fact, been acting together in close accord for some time on the question of Macedonian reforms, and had Aehrenthal, a subtle as well as a strong man, been earlier in the field, it is conceivable that he might have succeeded in converting this accord into a firm attachment based on mutual advantage. The statesmen of a new and Liberal Russia were now, however, unwilling to undo the good work of reconciliation with Great Britain which had advanced so far, and behind the forces which were drawing these two countries together

was the steady pressure of France. On the last day of August, 1907, the Anglo-Russian convention was signed, and therewith the Triple Entente was complete.

His schemes frustrated, Aehrenthal showed his disappointment by a deliberate and almost ostentatious disregard of Russian sensibilities in the further development of Austrian policy in the Balkans. Early in January, 1908, he entered into an agreement with Turkey by which Austria, in consideration of a concession for the construction of a railway through the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar from Bosnia to Mitrovitza, the northern terminus of the existing Salonica railway, withdrew from the Macedonian reform movement, in which all the Powers were now interesting themselves. By this act of defection Austria not only wrecked the work of amelioration in a part of the Ottoman Empire where it was most urgently needed, but broke up the European Concert and, above all, betrayed Russia's confidence. Germany alone upheld the action of her ally.

But worse was soon to follow. An understanding already existed between Aehrenthal and the Russian Foreign Minister, M. Isvolsky, that Russia would not stand in the way of Austria's formal annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina if carried out after due notice and in a form that should as little as possible excite the disfavour of Europe. On July 24, 1908, the Young Turkish revolution broke out, and for a time it promised to be the prelude to a new era of reform from which not only Turkey but her tributary territories in Europe would benefit. It even seemed possible that a strong Government might now arise capable of pulling the tottering empire together, and defying its enemies. Regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina as still belonging to Turkey, the reformers proposed, indeed, to embrace these provinces in the parliamentary system which was part of their scheme of national regeneration.

With a view to frustrating this design, and at the same time ending Serbo-Croatian agitation in these territories, Aehrenthal determined to convert Austria's legal occupation into formal possession. For territories hitherto under Turkish rule any change of government could not fail to be an improvement and it must be said for the Austrian occupation of the provinces that it had brought about steady political and material progress; administration, if inclined to be rigid, was fairly efficient, and if the Serbian population at least never

recognized finality in the new order of things it would have been reluctant to go back to the old.

Now, without prior communication with the signatories of the Treaty of Berlin, Aehrenthal persuaded the Emperor to issue a decree on October 3rd proclaiming the annexation of the two provinces as an "accomplished fact." At the same time Austria retroceded to the Sultan her rights in respect of the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar, giving him the flattering assurance of her confidence that the Sultan was now strong enough to maintain order and good government in that region without outside help. In connivance with Vienna, Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria two days later threw off the Turkish suzerainty and proclaimed his realm as henceforth an independent kingdom.

In Austria-Hungary the decree of annexation was hailed as a masterpiece of policy, a proof of strong statecraft, and an earnest of reviving prestige. Elsewhere, except in Germany, the feelings which it created were those of irritation and resentment. Although the Russian Government had not been taken into confidence as to the moment of the daring stroke, M. Isvolsky had little cause for complaint, for he was an accomplice before the fact; but the nation warmly condemned it. Russia, however, was still weakened by her war with Japan, and was neither willing nor able at that time to face another and perhaps a more hazardous struggle, even for the sake of Serbia and the Slavic cause. Italy also had reason for annoyance, inasmuch as by the treaty with Austria by which she joined the Triple Alliance each Power bound itself to adopt no measure that would disturb the *status quo* in the Balkans with out prior agreement with the other. Great Britain and France protested, but without great vigour or urgency, for raiding Turkey had for half a century been regarded as no less venial than robbing an orchard, and all the Powers had at one time or another either committed the offence or condoned it in others. When, therefore, the German Government, while denying prior knowledge of Austria's intentions, promptly asserted the doctrine, "My ally, right or wrong!" and gave Russia to understand that if a quarrel arose she would have to be reckoned with as an antagonist, no other choice remained except to tolerate the act of illegality and allow the geographers to recolour the map of South-east Europe accordingly.

Even Russia's proposal, which the British Government accepted, that the proceeding should for the sake of appearances be regularized

by a conference of the Powers had to be abandoned on the refusal of Germany and Austria to take part. So far was Prince Bülow from disclaiming Germany's connivance, that he admitted that in taking Austria's side she had not acted merely from motives of fidelity, but "above all things and in the first line" from a desire to assert "German prestige and Germany's international position." Still more did the Emperor seal his complicity in this act of aggression when on visiting Vienna in September, 1910, he reminded the City Council, in replying to its address of welcome, how he had "taken his stand in shining armour at a grave moment by the side of your most gracious Sovereign." Prince Bülow contended later that the acceptance by the Powers of Austria's action as an "accomplished fact," consequent upon Germany's resolute determination to support it, if necessary, by war, proved that the policy of "encirclement," which for him had never had any terror, lacked substantive value.

The Government of Vienna pleaded at the time that annexation was necessary in order to defeat a conspiracy of Serbo-Croat with Serbian politicians for the subversion of Habsburg power in the provinces, and in order to give colour to this contention it instituted the notorious Agram high treason trial, of which the intended victims were some fifty Croatian Serbs. The trial had a sequel in which the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office, its diplomatic agents in Serbia, and the historian Dr. Heinrich Friedjung played an unenviable part. Primed with Foreign Office documents, Dr. Friedjung, in an article published in a Vienna Ministerial journal in March, 1909, had professed to demonstrate the existence of this conspiracy and had even accused a number of well-known Serbo-Croatian politicians by name. Prosecuting the historian for slander, the accused men were able to prove that the documents on which he had based his accusations were fictitious and had been concocted in the Austro-Hungarian legation in Belgrade. Although the judge had been chosen as a safe man and the jury had been carefully picked, the evidence of forgery and subornation was irresistible, and the Foreign Office and its chief witness emerged from the trial humiliated; whereupon Aehrenthal disclaimed belief in the existence of the conspiracy which his too credulous Press agent had been instructed to lay bare.

In Serbia and Montenegro, which now saw their hopes of union destroyed, the annexations created a violent outcry against Austrian

duplicity and treachery, and had Serbia been allowed she would at once have made war single-handed upon the powerful aggressor. Restrained by the Powers, she protested for a long time, until it was seen that Russia was not disposed to risk war by raising objection, whereupon the incident was discreetly regarded as closed. In March, 1909, the Serbian Government, on the pressure of the Powers, formally withdrew all claims against Bosnia, and Austria, on the other hand, gave a written assurance of her friendly disposition and her intention to respect Serbian independence. In the meantime, recognizing the wisdom of regularizing her action as far as was possible, Austria had concluded a convention with Turkey under which she agreed to pay to her the sum of two million pounds, to respect the religious rights of the Mussulman population in the annexed provinces, and to renounce all rights in relation to the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar, with the result that Serbia and Montenegro were now able to join hands and the former gained access to the sea, though without obtaining a port of her own. Nevertheless, the annexations remained a flagrant violation of international law and a dangerous precedent for Sovereigns and Governments attracted by the dictum that “Might is right.” Aehrenthal’s reward was his elevation to the rank of count, an honour which he did not long enjoy, for he died in February, 1912, and was succeeded by Count Berchtold. Meanwhile, the revolutionary movement had won another triumph in Turkey. After a temporary reverse the Young Turks came to power again at the end of April, 1909, and deposed Abdul Hamid. Originally welcomed by the Western States as a portent of brighter days for the Turkish Empire, the Young Turk movement nevertheless ended by disappointing Liberal expectations. Under the new order there was as much despotism as under the old; anarchy continued in Macedonia, the cockpit of Turkish misrule; and in 1910 Albania, failing to secure the redress of her grievances, rose in revolt.

Austria’s act of aggression set in train a series of larger events which further threatened the integrity of the Turkish Empire. Now Italy argued that if one party to the Triple Alliance had a right to set at naught Germany’s ally, the same right could not well be refused to another, and deeming the time opportune for enforcing the long-deferred claim to Tripoli, her Government in September, 1911, served on the Porte a demand for the voluntary cession of the province. As

the demand was not conceded, war was at once declared, and as Italy was well prepared she was at a great advantage. Early in November Italy declared the annexation of the Tripolitana and Cyrenaica, but hostilities continued on land and sea for the greater part of a year in the form of a succession of indecisive engagements, in which large forces were on no occasion employed.

Turkey would have continued the struggle longer but for the fact that more serious trouble had arisen in her European dominion. A definitive treaty of peace was concluded at Lausanne on October 18, 1912, Turkey agreeing to withdraw from the Tripolitana and Cyrenaica, though not formally ceding these territories, and Italy to withdraw from the islands of the Ægean which she had occupied during the war. Italy also undertook to pay annually to the Treasury of the Ottoman Public Debt a sum corresponding to the average of the sums which in the three years preceding the war had been allocated for the use of the Public Debt from the revenue of the provinces, provision being made for the commutation of this charge by arrangement.

The Tripoli episode placed Germany, as Turkey's protector, in a difficult position, and her unwillingness to give to Italy the ready support which she had offered to Austria in her aggressive adventure three years before convinced the Southern Power still further that the union of the three allies was not one of equals.

Turkey was in urgent need of a peace, however, since in the Balkans she had suddenly been assailed by a powerful combination of enemies who had long been impatient to strike a blow together for freedom. Austria's action in 1908 had convinced the Balkan States that none of them was any longer safe from aggression so long as they trusted to outside help. In their uncertainty they therefore united, and the Balkan League, composed of Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro, and Greece, was formed in the winter of 1911-12 as a bulwark against hostile pressure either from North or South, but also with the object of expelling Turkey from Macedonia and Thrace. Roumania remained outside, but without concealing the fact that her sympathies were with the allies. In October, 1912, the States of the League rose against their ancient oppressor, and within two months Turkey was beaten and at their mercy. Throughout the war Germany had openly espoused the Turkish cause, and had only been restrained from more active

measures by the influence of the Entente Powers, whose sole concern was to localize the conflict. For some months also the Austro-Hungarian army was mobilized in readiness for intervention, until the removal of diplomacy to a cooler temperature eased the tension.

At the invitation of the British Government, a series of Conferences of ambassadors met in London in December, 1912, and as a result of a friendly exchange of views it was agreed to press the Porte to make such cessions of territory as the fortunes of war seemed to justify, and the proposals on the subject were embodied in the Treaty of London of May 13th. This treaty was never ratified. Before a final settlement was arrived at, Bulgaria, greedy for a larger share of the spoils, challenged Serbia and Greece, and all efforts to prevent a second conflict proved futile. "The Balkan States," said Count Tisza, the Hungarian Minister-President, "can decide for war; we shall, of course, regret it, but the decision is within their right." Grave doubts were entertained about this regret: Austria was believed, with good reason, to have provoked the second appeal to arms. In the London Conferences Germany and England had worked cordially together and their association in the common cause of peace seemed to create a new bond of sympathy between the Governments and to bridge over many outstanding points of difference. No one was more enthusiastic in praise of the conciliatory part played at that time by the British Foreign Secretary than the German Chancellor, who said in the Imperial Diet (April 7, 1913): " Europe will know how to thank the British Secretary for Foreign Affairs for the extraordinary devotion and spirit of conciliation with which he has conducted the discussions in the Ambassadors' Conferences in London, and has already succeeded in adjusting differences of opinion. Germany shares in these thanks all the more willingly since we know that we are at one with the aims of British policy, and, while remaining faithful to our allies, have worked with her on the same lines." He added: "It seems to me that the mutual confidence which has for so long been absent, to the detriment of both countries and the world, is beginning to return. Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey have affirmed that Anglo-German relations are good at the present time. I can confirm and joyfully welcome this." There can be no doubt that these words faithfully reflected Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg's attitude to Great Britain at that juncture and the spirit which he was still determined to cultivate in his official dealings

with that country.

Hostilities having been resumed in circumstances no longer unfavourable to her, Turkey was now able to retrieve some of the concessions which the Powers, in their abortive conferences, had wrested from her on behalf of the victorious League. Gallantly though Bulgaria had fought against Turkey, she was now outmatched, and she came out of the struggle gaining little save humiliation and a huge debt. To the surprise of Europe, Roumania, who had hitherto kept aloof from the League, sided with Serbia and Greece against Bulgaria in the second war, and so gave a decisive turn to the final struggle, though in so doing she placed herself in direct opposition to Austria.

The sequel to the two Balkan wars was the Treaty of Bucharest (August 10, 1913), which was likewise the work of the European Concert. In the enforcement of this treaty upon such of the Balkan States as were unwilling to be at peace and disarm the German Emperor played an important part. By it Roumania obtained Silistria and a strip of Bulgarian territory on the Dobrudja frontier, while Macedonia was divided between Serbia, who received a large region in the interior, and Greece, to which fell Salonica and Kavalla. During the first war Serbia had occupied Durazzo, in Albania, but now Austrian jealousy of her ambition for a place on the Adriatic led to her withdrawal within her old eastern frontier. Out of regard for Austria the Powers, against their better judgment, elevated Albania into an independent principality, thereby adding to the political oddities for which the East of Europe had so long been famous. As Kavalla had likewise been taken from her, Serbia equally lost her outlook upon the Ægean, though the final territorial adjustment left her with an addition of 15,- 240 square miles to her former area: Montenegro gained 2,130 square miles, Bulgaria (on balance) 6,860 square miles, Greece 16,920 square miles, and Roumania 2,970 square miles.

Next to Turkey, at whose expense the rectification of frontiers was made, the treaty of Bucharest gave least satisfaction to Austria, whose Foreign Secretary professed to regard the settlement as “highly artificial” and provisional. Austria had, indeed, gained the attachment of Bulgaria, but she had lost the confidence of the rest of the Balkan States and increased the antagonism of Russia.

To the superficial observer the two outstanding facts in German politics at the beginning of 1914, were, as regards France, a widening

breach, creating everywhere the apprehension that the conflict which both countries had anticipated so long was at hand, but as regards England a distinct movement, if not towards a positive friendship, at least towards a tolerant understanding. The belief still prevailed almost generally in Germany that the real, if not the only, centre of danger was the West. The Morocco question had been settled to the satisfaction of France, yet without abating the friction to which it had given rise, for while France was convinced that she had only received her due, and accordingly felt under no obligation to be grateful, the treaty of 1911 was regarded by most Germans as for their country a humiliating surrender. The exceptional military measures adopted by both countries in 1913 may also have emphasized the fact, as old as 1870, that the question of Alsace-Lorraine was an insuperable obstacle to a genuine and permanent reconciliation. Nevertheless, although the strain upon the relations with France seemed to be tending to a rupture, it was clear to all who looked below the surface of events that an even greater, if not more immediate, source of anxiety for Germany and for Europe at large was to be found on the Eastern frontier, where Russia had long been chafing more and more under Austrian provocation. Never since the fall of the first Chancellor did German statesmanship show itself so short-sighted as in its attitude towards Austria's Balkan policy from the opening of the new century forward. The fact that Germany claimed for herself no special interests in the Balkans might appear to have obscured the minds of the Emperor and his Ministers to the fact that Russia did claim there interests of vital and overwhelming importance, and to have caused them to forget that the more Germany identified herself with Austrian aims the greater became her responsibility and also her risks as the major partner in the Triple Alliance.

For inasmuch as Germany never tried to conceal the fact that she was behind her ally in her aggressive designs in the Balkans and in her evident determination to challenge Russia's right to be regarded as the natural protector of the Slavic States there, it followed necessarily that the antagonism over the Balkan question was viewed by Russia as merely another form of the old antagonism between Teutonism and Slavism. Bismarck, in general one of the least nervous of men, had from the beginning of the 'eighties been haunted by anxiety as to the possible development of the Pan-Slavic movement in Russia, and by a

conviction that the more the movement spread and deepened the less it would be possible for Germany and Russia to work together harmoniously. In the end German statesmen deliberately went out of their way to precipitate this long-feared and long-threatened conflict.

The course and issue of Germany's Austro-Balkan policy during the reign of the third Emperor have afforded a remarkable confirmation alike of the foresight and the fears of her greatest Chancellor. It is the fashion to regard Austria as having been the mere tool of German diplomacy throughout the whole duration of the Triple Alliance. So long as Bismarck remained in office it is true that Germany exacted full obedience to the laws of the alliance as laid down by himself, and it was well for her and for the peace of Europe that this was so. One of these laws required that Austria should do nothing that might disturb the political equilibrium in the Near East and so set Russia by the ears. But the strength of an alliance and its effectiveness for the purpose in view depend only in a minor degree upon formal pledges, and for the rest altogether upon the existence on the part of the allies of unity of aim, or, if that be absent, upon the purpose and will that happen to predominate. Before Bismarck went complete unity of aim had ceased to exist as between Germany and Austria, and when he disappeared there was no longer a strong hand capable of directing Germany's ally in the ways of prudence and safety. Freed from control, Austria began to think less of the alliance and more of her own interests. The positions of piper and dancer were reversed: now Austria began to set the tune and it was Germany who performed the *pas seul,* while Italy stood by, an impatient and irritated observer. It was a situation which Bismarck, in his later years, had anticipated with growing anxiety. "We should not forsake Austria," he wrote at the end of his Memoirs, "but we should not, on the other hand, lose sight of the fact that the policy of Vienna with or without intention, may forsake us." There was no danger of that defection of Austrian policy so long as Germany remained in such a relation to Austria and Russia as enabled her to exert a direct influence on both. This relation continued until 1890. No sooner, however, had Bismarck ceased to be Chancellor than the old *rapport* with Russia was broken, and his earliest and most urgent warnings, when he exchanged the rôle of actor upon the stage for that of critic in the stalls, related to this departure from the tried tradition which lie regarded as his most valuable legacy to his successors. For

he saw clearly that the freer from Germany's influence Russia was allowed to become, the freer would Austria likewise become from Germany's restraint, until the time arrived when she would break loose from control.

The abandonment of the reinsurance treaty may have proceeded, as was claimed at the time, from the laudable motive of integrity – the desire to evade a possible conflict of loyalty and to be quite open with Austria – yet the effect was to impose on German statesmanship a new and heavy responsibility. Bismarck clearly indicated the risk which was being run when he wrote in 1891: "From the moment that the conviction is established in Vienna that the bridge between Germany and Russia is broken down Austria will assume a different attitude towards the German Empire, and Germany will run the risk of becoming in a sense dependent on Austria."

When at a later date he disclosed to the unsuspecting world the existence of the treaty of 1884, he again warned the Government of the danger of one day "being dragged at the wheels of the Austrian chariot," instead of remaining itself in charge, and suggested that already "in consequence of the estrangement between Germany and Russia Austria has been enabled to exercise considerable pressure upon Germany." "Apparently," he added, "German statesmanship no longer observes a disinterested attitude in Eastern affairs. By following the path upon which she has entered, Germany is in danger of gradually becoming dependent upon Austria, and in the end she may have to pay with her blood and treasure for Austria's Balkan policy."

The contingency which Bismarck had feared arrived early in the new century. In championing Austria in a policy of provocation against Russia, Germany ran an incalculably grave risk, yet this risk seemed to cause her no anxiety or misgiving. The Imperial Chancellor, indeed, in a speech made in the Diet as late as April, 1913, spoke impressively on the subject of the "Slavic peril" and of the folly of doing anything that could hasten its entrance into the sphere of immediate speculation. He even discouraged the use of the very phrase itself as likely to "act suggestively and irrigate the soil upon which popular passions thrive." Even he, however, failed to recognize that the real irritant of the situation was his own Government's short-sightedness in allowing Austria to use Germany in support of an aggressive Balkan policy. It seemed as though Austria was at last

avenging herself for the contumely inflicted upon her by Prussia half a century before. Now the positions of the two Powers as established by Bismarck in his diplomatic encounters with Rechberg and Mensdorff, and confirmed more definitely by Sadowa in 1866, were reversed. Not since the time when Schwarzenberg directed Prussian policy with an iron hand had Vienna asserted so complete a control over the statesmen of Berlin as during the years of Aehrenthal's and still more of Berchtold's astute and masterful management of foreign affairs.

To outside observers the growing disposition of the Berlin Foreign Office to defer to Austria and go her way was the more incomprehensible since it was just as unnecessary from the standpoint of policy as it was injudicious from that of safety. For from the military standpoint Austria was still no less dependent upon Germany than in Bismarck's time. Russia being impossible as an ally, and her alliance with Italy being unreal and liable to rupture at any moment, the withdrawal of German support would at once have made her position precarious. Because Germany had Austria still in her power, therefore, she might, had she been so minded, have continued to control Austrian policy in the interests of peace without in the slightest degree endangering the political ties uniting the two countries. Justifying her support of Austria by the obligations imposed upon her by the Triple Alliance, Germany in fact went counter both to the spirit and the letter of the treaties upon which that compact was based. Bismarck had often pointed to the impropriety and danger of allowing the Alliance to be used as a cover for aggressive action in the Near East or elsewhere. The Alliance was not, indeed, expressly designed to maintain in perpetuity the status established by the Congress of Berlin, of which it was not merely a sequel but a direct effect, but it was no less a vital interest of all the allies that there should be no arbitrary disturbance of the Balkan equilibrium, and Italy had required formal stipulations on the point. In inviting Austria to exercise a free hand in the Balkans, therefore, Germany exceeded her liabilities to one ally and came short of her duty to another, whilst challenging Russia's resentment into the bargain. This perversion of an alliance, whose strongest justification was that it was originally pacific in purpose, involved the obvious risk that at any time local questions of Balkan politics might become European questions and small causes of disagreement and friction give rise to grave international crises,

since if Germany was behind Austria, so also was France behind Russia.

Since 1908 the gulf between Austria and Russia had been steadily widening. In that year Russia had tolerated Austria's absorption of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in contravention of the Treaty of Berlin, because in her then enfeebled state and in face of Germany's menace she could not have made resistance effective. On the other hand, the diplomatic reverse thus inflicted upon her had been somewhat retrieved when with her help Serbia came out of the Balkans wars of 1912-13 with largely extended territory, and with at least a telescopic outlook, over a friendly neighbour's domain, upon the sea. The fact that Serbian ambition had to this extent been gratified roused Austria's jealousy, and it became a fixed aim of her Balkan policy to prevent any further Slavic concentration so near her own frontiers. Signor Gioletti, Italian Foreign Secretary at the time, is responsible for the disclosure that immediately after the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest in August, 1913, the Austrian Government sounded Italy as to the propriety of a joint attack upon Serbia.

Serbia was by no means free from reproach. She repaid hostility in kind, and her success in the Balkan campaigns revived in her people the hope that Bosnia and Herzegovina might yet be won back from Austrian hands. This hope gave motive power to a renewed Greater Serbian agitation, which, spreading beyond the frontiers of the kingdom, was actively carried on in the coveted provinces and even in the other Slavic territories under Austro-Hungarian rule. Unhappily these Serbian endeavours did not stop at agitation. On June 28, 1914, while visiting the Bosnian town of Serajevo, the administrative centre of Austria's new provinces, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the heir apparent to the Habsburg throne, and his wife, the Duchess of Hohenberg, were assassinated in broad daylight in the public street. Investigations made by the Austrian Government made it clear that the murders were political. It was even maintained that the crime had been arranged in Belgrade and assisted by Serbian military officers and Government officials. These, it was alleged, had supplied the murderers with arms, had facilitated their entry into Bosnia, and had, in fact, co-operated in the foul conspiracy in every detail of its execution. Without giving the Serbian Government an opportunity of meeting the charge of official complicity, the Austro-Hungarian

Government on July 23rd served on it an ultimatum – it was later declared euphemistically to be only a *démarche* – requiring a public condemnation of and a declaration of dissociation from anti-Austrian propagandism, and compliance within forty-eight hours with a series of demands, some of a very arbitrary kind, intended to secure the prompt punishment of the assassins and their fellow-conspirators, the suppression of all movements in Serbia hostile to Austria-Hungary, the removal from office of persons who could be shown to be connected with such movements, and the co-operation of Austrian agents with the Serbian authorities which should be charged with the future watching of Slavic propagandism. The ultimatum was in its entire tenor so peremptory and in its purpose so humiliating that out of Austria few people believed that it could be accepted, and in Austria few wished that it would be.

How far the Serbian Government was implicated in or had knowledge of the agitations which led up to the murders of Serajevo may never be known, but there can be little doubt that these agitations, if not directly encouraged by the Government, were at least not discouraged, and that minor Serbian officers and officials were directly or indirectly involved. At the same time, Austria's indictment was to some extent discounted by the fact, now recalled, that in 1909, as the Friedjung trial had proved, her Government had not hesitated to resort to the use of forged documents in its endeavour to discredit Serbia and the Serbian cause. Confronted, however, by Austria's threatening attitude, and unwilling to enter into a quarrel in which Serbia might find herself without friends, the incriminated Government appears to have been more concerned to make amends and to give reasonable guarantees for the future than to quibble over the precise degree of its legal or moral responsibility. Accordingly it immediately notified its willingness to accept the major part of the Austrian demands, while offering to accept the adjudication of the International Tribunal of The Hague upon the others, several of which involved an unjustifiable interference with the internal affairs of Serbia as a sovereign State. Austria had served upon the Great Powers on July 24th, a copy of the Note to Serbia, and the German Government, untroubled by its own passive attitude towards the Pan-German movement, for years so menacing and obnoxious, not to one but several neighbouring States, promptly signified its full approval of

Austria's demands.

Meanwhile, Serbia had sought the advice of Russia, and that Power had let it be known in Vienna that, as the protector of the Slavic races, it must not be regarded as indifferent to the interests of its Balkan *protégé*. To Germany at least this action by Russia could not have given surprise. In a statement subsequently published by the Foreign Office in Berlin it was stated: "We were perfectly aware that a possible warlike attitude of Austria-Hungary against Serbia might bring Russia upon the field, and that it might, therefore, involve us in a war in accordance with our duties as allies."

During the next few days there was a busy exchange of Notes between the Great Powers, with constant diplomatic conversations in their capitals, Serbia in the meantime withdrawing into the background, since the dispute had now been taken up by more important contestants over larger issues. Great Britain's position hitherto had been that of the mediator and conciliator, eager to ease the way of negotiation and to find a basis of reasonable compromise. With this idea in view the British Foreign Secretary proposed that the whole question should be referred to the ambassadors accredited to London by the four disinterested Powers, Germany, France, Italy, and Great Britain. To this course only Germany objected, and the suggestion that Germany should propose a formula of reference acceptable to herself and her ally was likewise rejected in Berlin. The German Government contended that Austria and Serbia must be allowed to settle the dispute alone, without the intervention of third parties; but the implication conveyed by this contention, that she was and wished to remain a neutral spectator, was inconsistent with the important facts that as Austria's ally she had, on her own admission, "permitted Austria a completely free hand in her action against Serbia," that even if she had not collaborated in the preparation of the Austrian Note to Serbia, she had, as was later established, been cognizant of its terms prior to its issue, and that she had on the day of its communication to the Powers informed the latter that it had her complete approval. Even when Austria had signified her willingness to accept mediation Germany still adhered to the view that such mediation should not extend to the dispute with Serbia "but merely to the relations between Austria-Hungary and Russia." By this time (July 28th) Austria had declared war on Serbia, though St. Petersburg and

Vienna continued in diplomatic communication.

While thus the Governments of the three Empires were contending over points of form and order, to Europe at large trivial and negligible, their rulers were simultaneously mobilizing their vast military forces. If there was to be war, it was obviously for Germany and Russia equally a matter of vital importance which should be first in the field. Apprehension and suspicion on both sides as to the precise character of the precautionary measures which were being taken may have helped in no small degree to precipitate the ensuing catastrophe. Nevertheless, it is impossible to doubt that, had it been allowed to meet, the Ambassadors' Conference, which had conduced so signally to harmony amongst the Powers in 1912-13, and by so doing had created an invaluable precedent, would have adjusted the dispute which the fates or human perversity willed should be decided by appeal to arms. A sort of fatalism appears to have forced events forward to the disastrous climax. The obsession of the "Slavic peril" had worked so long upon the imagination of Germany that because the long-dreaded clash between the two races now seriously threatened it was assumed to be inevitable; the hour had come for Germanism to assert its supremacy or be overthrown.

Austria was committed to war with Russia from the moment that she invaded Serbian territory, and both she and Germany knew it. Behind her, however, was the Triple Alliance, or at least, with certainty, the major partner, her close ally for weal or woe since 1879. Russia having mobilized, while giving the undertaking that no hostile step should be taken so long as negotiations continued, Germany promptly did the same, but for her mobilization was meant to be an act of war, and such it proved. The entrance of Germany into the quarrel necessarily brought in France, whose aid was pledged to Russia under the terms of the dual alliance.

There remained still to be defined the attitude of Great Britain towards the Powers of the Triple Entente and that of Italy towards her allies of the Triple Alliance. There was at no time real uncertainty as to what Great Britain would do. The German Government knew well the importance attached by her to the maintenance of the integrity of French territory, for if any obscurity had existed before 1912, Lord Haldane's mission in that year had removed it. Moreover, during the ten days which intervened between the serving of the Austrian Note

upon Serbia and the actual opening of hostilities in that country the British Foreign Secretary, in his conversations with the German ambassador in London, had emphasized the danger of supposing that if France were drawn into the quarrel England would or could remain neutral. When war seemed no longer avoidable the German Government tried to win England over to a passive position by the promise that in the event of a German victory no French territory should be annexed. Asked if a similar undertaking would be given in regard to the French colonies, the German Chancellor, with undiplomatic candour, replied that he was unable to give a pledge.

Whatever may have been the possibility of England's abstention – and it was never strong, even if it existed at all – all doubt was removed when, in response to an invitation to France and Germany to declare whether they would respect the neutrality of Belgium, an obligation resting upon all three Powers in virtue of the treaty of 1839, France replied affirmatively and Germany refused to give any undertaking: before this time, indeed, the German Chancellor had plainly hinted that it was intended to use Belgium as a military road to France. On August 2nd German troops invaded Luxemburg, whose integrity Germany had likewise guaranteed by treaty, and also France, and two days later they invaded Belgium. Simultaneously hostilities broke out on the distant eastern frontier, which was crossed by Russian troops on August 1st. Great Britain formally declared war upon Germany on August 4th, but only eight days later upon Austria-Hungary. Her entrance into the war was endorsed by the entire British Empire, every portion of which contributed voluntarily but unstintingly both of manhood and treasure.

Italy's attitude turned upon the question whether for her a *casus fœderis* had arisen under the terms of the treaty of alliance of 1882. Her Government decided that it had not, contending that Austria and Germany had been the aggressors, whereas the alliance was intended to be of a purely defensive character. Defining the liabilities created by the Triple Alliance, Bismarck wrote in 1890 in his Hamburg organ (April 26th) that it covered "only the *damnum emergens,* not the *lucrum cessans,* of the Power concerned," adding, "least of all is it Germany's affair to promote the ambitious plans of Austria in the Balkans." To the last he maintained also that it was never contemplated that Germany should accept responsibility for Austria's Oriental policy

against Russia or for its consequences. For Italy, however, it could be claimed that her liability was still more narrowly circumscribed, since Austria was under a pledge to her to resort to no measure disturbing to the existing status in the Balkans. The Italian Foreign Secretary stated later that his Government had been kept completely in the dark as to the measures contemplated against Serbia until action had been taken: "we were not consulted," he said; "we were told nothing."

Bismarck was accustomed to say that the stability of all treaties depended upon two tacit conditions – *rebus sic stantibus and ultra posse obligatur nemo,* and of the Triple Alliance he once said that although it had been repeatedly renewed "it would be unwise to regard it as a permanent security against all possible eventualities altering the political, material, and moral conditions under which it was created." The alliance which had been formed only for protection and defence broke down in the most critical moment of its history because it was invoked on behalf of a policy of aggression; formed in order to meet a specific contingency, it broke down because a new set of circumstances had arisen to which it was not intended to apply; Italy withdrew because she was no longer willing to be used as a tool for Austria's restless ambitions.

At a later date Italy, and after her Japan and Portugal, in virtue of their special obligations to Great Britain, entered the field as combatants on the side of the Entente Powers, while Turkey and Bulgaria joined the two Empires. Not only the greater part of Europe, however, but the Asiatic dominions of Turkey, and Germany's African empire, were gradually drawn into active hostilities. After the war had raged more than two years, Roumania took sides. From the beginning she had declined to support her allies of the Triple Alliance for the same reason as Italy – that the war was aggressive and that she had not been consulted before the decision of Austria and Germany to chastise Serbia was taken. When in September, 1916, Roumania entered the struggle it was in pursuance of national aspirations hitherto obstructed by her traditional enemy, Austria: for her, as for Italy, the war became one for the liberation of countrymen long held under alien Habsburg rule. Finally, early in 1917, the United States owing to repeated invasions by Germany of her rights as a neutral State, made common cause with the rest of the Anglo-Saxon family and its allies in a struggle which had in the meantime been recognized

throughout the world as involving issues of the deepest moment for the welfare of mankind.

Out of a Balkan dispute had thus grown a world-war, but of this unparalleled catastrophe the Balkan dispute was not the cause but only the occasion.

This History leaves Germany, as it found her at the opening of the narrative, in the throes of internal convulsion. A hundred years ago her peoples, freed from foreign thraldom, were striving for unity and political liberty. Unity came after another half-century of struggle, but the oligarchic forms of government still persisted. To-day the nation's age-long political aspirations are nearing fulfilment, but the unity which was so hardly won appears to be jeopardized. It is inevitable that the crisis through which Germany is passing at the time these closing words are written (December, 1918) will entail far-reaching departures and transformations, both political and social. Nevertheless, it is justifiable to believe that, under whatever form of government the nation may choose to live henceforth (for the choice, for the first time in its history, is in its own power), the Empire will continue; nay, more, that it will be strengthened in the end rather than weakened, by renovation and adaptation to the imperious demands of a new and, let us hope, a brighter era of European and world civilization.

APPENDIX A. THE FRANCO-RUSSIAN ALLIANCE

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THE STORY OF THE origin of the Franco-Russian alliance and the text of the military and naval conventions upon which it was based is told by the French Government for the first time in a Yellow Book published late in 1918, while this volume was in the press. Serious negotiations with a view to a formal *entente* were begun in 1891, and it is interesting to note that Russia was influenced not only by the cutting of the Berlin-St. Petersburg wire, but by the apprehension that Great Britain contemplated overtures to the Triple Alliance. On August 10th of that year M. Laboulaye, the French ambassador in St. Petersburg, was able to report the Czar's assurance, "Le principe d'une entente cordiale avec la France est arrêté, mais la forme à donner à cette entente est à examiner." Later in the month the formula for an *"entente cordiale"* was adopted: the two Powers were to act together in the interest of peace and devise concerted measures should peace be threatened by the aggressive acts of other Powers. A year later (August, 1892) an undated *projet de convention militaire* was signed by General de Boisdeffre for France and General Obroutcheff for Russia.

Contemplating the eventuality of either of the Powers being attacked by the forces of the Triple Alliance, this *projet* provided that if France were attacked by Germany or by Italy with Germany's support Russia would employ all her available forces against Germany, and that if Russia were attacked by Germany or by Austria with Germany's support, France would employ all her available forces against the same enemy; in the event of the forces of the Triple Alliance, or one of the Powers thereof, being mobilized, France and Russia were to mobilize immediately all their forces and transport them as near to their frontiers as possible; the two allies were not to conclude peace separately; the convention was to have the same duration as the Triple Alliance; and all the clauses of the convention were to be "kept strictly secret."

Although France was pressing the matter forward all the time, it was only on December 15th, 1893, that M. de Giers reported the formal adoption of the convention by the Czar. In July, 1912, the military convention was supplemented by a naval convention.

APPENDIX B. THE RUSSO-GERMAN REINSURANCE TREATY OF 1884-90

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BISMARCK'S DISCLOSURE OF THE existence of this treaty was made in the *Hamburger Nachrichten* of October 24, 1896, and further articles bearing on the subject appeared in issues of that journal for October 31st and November 12th. The substance of the revelations was published in *The Times* of October 26th, and supplementary statements from Berlin, Vienna, and other Continental capitals appeared in many succeeding issues of that journal.

A large amount of controversy has arisen regarding the treaty, and the chief difficulties involved have been well stated in a discussion printed as an appendix to Mr. C. Grant Robertson's excellent political study, *Bismarck*, published after the present volume was in print.

The terms of the treaty have never been published, but, whatever its character, the arrangement concluded lasted until just before or after Bismarck's retirement in March, 1890. Was the treaty first concluded for three years only, as is widely believed, or was it of six years' duration? If the former, was the treaty of 1884 simply renewed in 1887, or was an altogether new treaty concluded in that year? It is true that in the debate which took place in the Imperial Diet on November 16, 1896, following Bismarck's disclosures, Prince Hohenlohe, the Chancellor, spoke of "the negotiations which took place between Russia and the German Empire from the year 1887 to 1890." It is quite possible, however, that these negotiations, the date of which is so vaguely stated, may have referred to the form which the treaty would have taken had it been renewed in 1890. There is reason to believe that Russia was desirous of having a freer hand in relation to problems of the Near East. It is more to the point that the Bismarck articles in the *Hamburger Nachrichten*, as well as the speakers who took part in the Diet debate referred to above, assumed that the treaty abandoned in 1890 was the one concluded in 1884.

A delicate point relates to the date of the treaty of 1884. Was the treaty concluded, as a French writer, M. André Mévil, says, on February 24, 1884, and merely ratified verbally at Skiernievice?